

PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE
STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

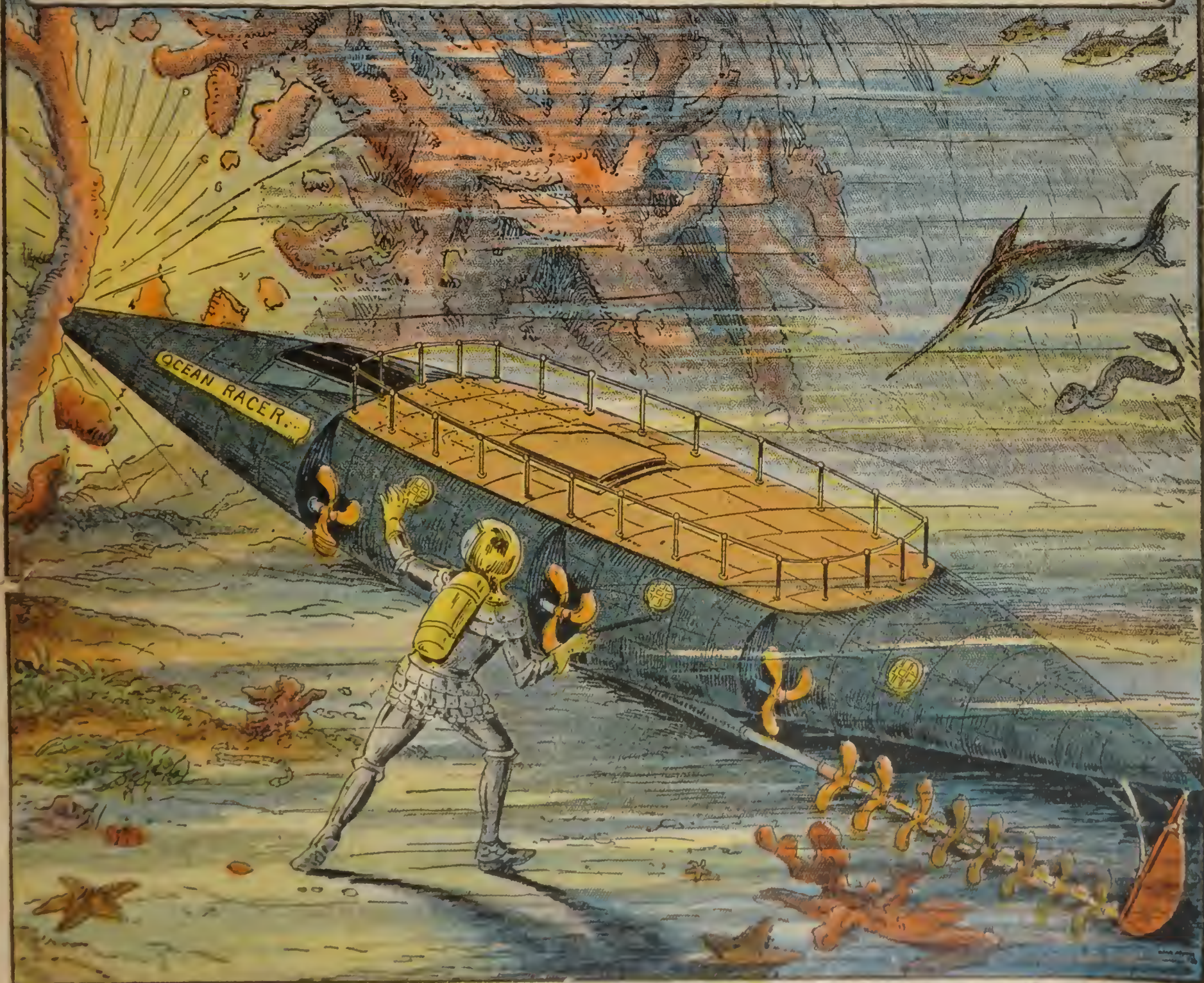
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No. 202.

NEW YORK, APRIL 16, 1902.

Price 5 Cents.

JACK WRIGHT^{2.} AND HIS^{1.} OCEAN RACER; OR, AROUND THE WORLD IN 20 DAYS. BY NONAME.



A sudden, smothered roar took place. A tremendous upheaval was seen at the reef, the water became fearfully agitated, and there came a concussion that almost flung Jack to the ground.

These Books Tell You Everything!

TRICKS WITH CARDS

PLUCK AND LUCK.

Complete Stories of Adventure.

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CHAPTER I.

THE BIG WAGER.

It was a cold, windy night in December; and snow was falling in blinding flakes upon the handsome town of Wrightstown, the bay at the head of which the houses were built was one mass of thick ice, and the shore was strewn with fishing smacks and rowboats that had been hauled out of the water.

This thriving place had been named after a retired seaman named Bill Wright, who had devoted his life to the invention of a submarine boat, and died before his project was realized.

His son Jack, now a handsome, strapping fellow of twenty, displaying a greater ability at inventing similar vessels, had taken up his father's talent, and had constructed several most marvellous underwater boats.

The boy lived in a magnificent mansion near a creek that ran up from the bay, upon which stood a large brick edifice in which he constructed his inventions.

An old man-of-warsman named Tim Topstay, who possessed a wooden leg, a glass eye, a wonderful fund of lies, and a sandy beard, was living at Jack's house, in company with a pugnacious little fat Dutchman of twenty-three, named Fritz Schneider, with yellow hair, and a gift of accordion playing.

They had both been messmates of Jack Wright upon his various voyages, never lost an opportunity of tantalizing each other, and were the boy's truest friends, bravest companions, and all three had acquired large fortunes from beneath the sea by the aid of Jack's boats.

On the night in question, a colored coachman in the young inventor's employ drove a magnificent team of prancing horses in silver-mounted harness, attached to a stylish coupe, up to the door of the mansion from the boy's handsome stables, and Jack, Tim and Fritz came from the house, entered the carriage, and were driven away.

They all wore full dress suits, silk hats and overcoats, for the trio had received an invitation to a grand banquet, given in honor of their past wonderful achievements by the chief justice of Wrightstown, and among the guests a number of celebrated scientists from different parts of the country were to be present to make the acquaintance of our three friends.

The house of the magistrate was a fine old manor on the outskirts of the town, and standing in a park of trees, and as they drove up the carriage drive to the entrance, the house was ablaze with lights.

Jack found an elegant assemblage of people in the handsome dwelling, and within a short time he and his friends were duly made acquainted with the guests by their genial host, and amid the harmonious strains of a fine band of musicians the supper proceeded.

Course after course of the most delicious viands were produced, after which wines and cigars were brought in, whereupon speeches were made, toasts were drunk, and then the party began to discuss the marvellous inventions Jack had patented, and the conversation, drifting from one topic of the banquet to the other, at length came to that of the swiftest

The scientific talk was rather too deep for Tim and Fritz to grasp, and they both felt decidedly uncomfortable in their handsome clothing, and kept nudging and winking at each other at a most violent rate.

"Blast my timbers!" growled Tim, in a whisper. "I wish I had a chaw o' terbacker, an' my ole togs on ag'in. I feel like a stuffed duck, Fritz, an' I wishes I wuz back in my quarters at home ag'in."

"Und me, too," said Fritz in low tones. "Vot's der matter mit us gotten oudt by der beck stoop alretty, und vait till Shack vhas get retty to go hisself home mit us again—huh?"

"Aye, aye!" eagerly assented the old sailor. "I ain't no ways ekal to ther jawin' tackle as is a-workin' in this room, and Jack don't need us, no how."

And so saying, Tim and Fritz linked arms and left the room.

Left alone in the midst of the guests, Jack was discussing the merits of the tubular spiral system of boilers for speed in yachts, when one of the gentlemen made the remark:

"Of course your inventions do not compare in point of speed with any of the well-known engines used on the fleetest yachts and ocean steamers that are now making such wonderful records?"

Jack glanced at the speaker.

He was a man of fifty, with snow-white hair and a dark, narrow face, his mustache as black as dye, his eyes and eyebrows the same hue, and his nose of a strong aquiline contour.

This individual had been introduced to Jack by the name of Captain Edward Knox, a retired sea captain, with plenty of money and an interest in one of the New York sailing vessel lines.

There was something about the man that was singularly repulsive to the boy, but he failed to show this feeling under his guise of politeness.

"You are mistaken, sir," quietly replied the boy. "My submarine boats are the swiftest on the face of the sea."

"Nonsense!" bluntly said Captain Knox, incredulously. "You must pardon my skepticism, but the fact is, there are no vessels known to exceed the speed of from twenty to thirty knots, shown by the steam yacht Dirk and the transatlantic steamer Majesty."

"Every one of my past inventions have done better than that time," said Jack coolly; "and I have now completed another boat which can easily make sixty knots an hour, called the Ocean Racer."

Everybody was amazed at this declaration of the boy, for they had been intently listening to the foregoing conversation, and exclamations of wonder and incredulity arose upon all sides.

"Humbug!" exclaimed Captain Knox.

"What! Do you doubt it?" demanded Jack in sharp tones.

"I most certainly do!" tartly replied the captain.

"By that, sir, you insinuate that I am a blower or a liar!" said Jack, a lurid gleam leaping into his dark eyes, and the hot color rising in his cheeks, and he struck the table with his hand.

A bland smile of lofty condescension crossed the captain's face.

"My dear boy," said he, cajolingly, "I don't want to insult you—I only wish to frankly confess my disbelief in any mortal boat being able to accomplish all you say your craft can do. I am an old sailor, and am accounted an expert judge of what we are discussing; therefore, I am perfectly competent to make my assertion."

Jack's temper cooled off a little, and subduing his resentment as best he could, he said in icy tones, darting an angry glance at the man:

"If you will give me an opportunity, Captain Knox, I would like to have the satisfaction of proving your error and my own skill as the inventor of the fastest boat in the world."

"You can easily do so," indifferently replied the captain; "but I don't believe you can! Why, boy, can't you see how absurd it is? The circumference of the earth is about 25,000 miles. At the rate of sixty miles an hour you could make 1,440 miles a day, and in a little less than eighteen days, if it were possible, you could go completely around the world!"

There was a general laugh from everybody at hearing this.

Jack was nettled, and asked:

"How long do you imagine it would take you to girdle the earth, captain?"

"It can be done overland and water in between seventy and eighty days."

"But by water, we will say for example," persisted Jack, "starting from here?"

"Lay out your course, and I will figure it."

"Start from Wrightstown and go to Gibraltar, then through the Mediterranean to the Suez Canal, down into the Red Sea to the Arabian Sea, and along the Indian Ocean to the Straits of Malacca, along the coast of China north of the Philippine Islands, following the tropic of Cancer, to the Sandwich Islands, down to Central America, across to the Caribbean Sea, up through the Gulf of Mexico, and then along the American coast."

The captain began to figure industriously with pencil and paper.

Presently he looked up, and there was an eager, expectant look upon the faces of all the scientific gentlemen looking on and listening.

"It could not be done by our fastest steamer or yacht, going at the phenomenal rate of 600 miles a day by the course you describe in less than fifty days, and then it would be the most wonderful trip on record. You must recollect that it is not a straight course, and that there would arise numberless delays, which might bring it up to seventy days."

Jack pondered a moment, and every one glanced at him curiously to see how he would take defeat, but the boy was unmoved.

"What would you say if I were to go around the world in twenty days, sir?" he asked, electrifying everybody by his bold assertion.

The captain laughed, and looked pityingly at Jack.

"It is simply impossible to do it!" he asserted emphatically.

"Well, sir, I can do it in my new boat."

"I'll wager you every dollar I possess in the world you can't do it."

"Don't be rash, Captain," warned Jack.

"I mean it."

"How much is it you possess?"

"Just \$500,000."

"I'll take that bet and give you odds," said Jack quietly.

Everybody was intensely amazed to hear this, for they all knew that both the boy and the captain had as much money as they claimed.

"Ridiculous!" scoffed the captain.

"Make out your check!" coolly replied Jack, withdrawing

a wallet from his pocket and extracting a blank check from it. "I mean business."

Everybody began to excitedly discuss the subject, and assured that the boy could not carry out such a phenomenal undertaking, the captain made out a check for half a million of dollars in bonds, and Jack added two hundred thousand dollars to this amount.

"Is it possible you are not jesting?" demanded Captain Knox, fixing a keen glance upon the undaunted boy.

"I am in deadly earnest, sir, as you will soon find out. Do you retreat?"

"No!" declared the captain, who was a determined man.

"Then here—let our mutual friend, the magistrate, hold the stakes!"

For an instant the captain hesitated and turned rather pale, for he was risking a fortune on a mere bet, which was all the money he had in the world, and he did not expect that Jack would take up the wager.

The cool confidence with which the boy acted and spoke disconcerted him, too, and made him feel nervous and doubtful.

He was a nervy man, though, and his pride would not permit him to withdraw after his skeptical, overbearing talk, although he suddenly had such misgivings when he saw how readily Jack took up his bet that he secretly wished that he had not been so hasty and rash making it.

With the utmost coolness he placed his note in the magistrate's hand, as Jack had already deposited his paper with the gentleman.

"You are foolish, young man," said the captain, "and I ought not to make this bet with you, as I am almost certain to win, but since you are so overconfident I mean to teach you a severe lesson to be more prudent in future."

"I am not too old to learn something new," smilingly replied Jack, "and never expect to be. If you win fairly, Captain, I shall be pleased to see you get my money, but if you lose I shall use your fortune to endow charitable institutions in Wrightstown, as a monument of your folly and my ability. I now call upon all these gentlemen to witness the fairness of this wager. Are you all satisfied, my friends?"

"Yes! Yes! Yes!" resounded eagerly upon all sides.

"Permit me to show you how you are bound to fail before you start on this rash, impossible trip, even if you manage to drive your marvelously swift boat along for twenty days at the high rate of speed you claim to have attained," said the captain, with a perceptible sneer.

"He is a trickster," flashed through Jack's mind, for this remark showed him something of Knox's inner nature he never knew before.

"You may have clear water to traverse nearly all the way around the globe," said Knox; "but unless you travel overland when you reach Central America (which will break the bet, as we wagered that the trip is to be made on the water only), how are you going to get across the isthmus and reach the Atlantic without going around South America—a journey that will occupy weeks?"

There was a triumphant look upon his face as he said this.

"I will tell you," quietly replied Jack, never losing his wits. "Upon a former submarine journey I once made, it was my very good fortune to discover a subterranean tunnel, running from the Bay of Honduras, under the isthmus, into the Pacific Ocean, and upon my return I intend to use it to get into the Gulf of Mexico."

The captain's face lengthened.

"If that is the case, you might possibly win," he remarked dryly; "but when do you intend to start, and what are the conditions?"

"Upon the first day of January, one week from to-day. I will start," the young inventor replied, "and I shall leave

at twelve o'clock noon. On the twenty-first day of the same month I shall return. If I fail to appear before the clock stops striking twelve I lose my bet."

"That is satisfactory," replied Knox, with a nod of approval.

"As to the conditions all I ask is to use my latest invention, the Ocean Racer, and have for companions my friend Tim and Fritz to help me work the boat, and you or a representative as a passenger to witness that I fulfill my part of the contract honestly."

"I shall go with you," said the captain, with an evil smile.

"Are there any more stipulations, Captain?"

"None whatever. I shall be promptly on hand. Here is my name and address."

"And so shall we, to see you off," said one of the gentlemen, speaking for all.

"I will take my departure, then, and begin my preparations, gentlemen," said Jack; "and I wish you all good-night."

He shook hands with them, called Tim and Fritz, and they were driven home.

"And I," muttered the captain, with a sardonic grin, as they left, "shall lay a dozen plans to thwart the success of your winning that bet and ruining me. You shall fail, Jack Wright, if my life pays the forfeit."

CHAPTER II.

THE OCEAN RACER.

The following day broke clear and bright, the sun shining down from a cloudless sky, and everything was covered with dazzling snow.

Merry sleigh bells jingled, as spirited horses dashed up and down the streets of Wrightstown, hitched to graceful cutters, and hundreds of men and boys were busy cleaning sidewalks and yards, when Tim got out of his bedroom window with a snow shovel in his hand, to clear the roof of the piazza in front of Jack's house.

He shoveled away industriously for some time, whistling a lively tune, and stopping occasionally to slap and blow on his hands, which the frosty air keenly nipped, when he suddenly espied Fritz approaching.

The little fat Dutchman did not see Tim, and a broad grin overspread the ancient mariner's face, and he picked up a tremendous shovelful of hard, packed snow, and quietly waited for Fritz to get nearer.

As soon as the young Dutchman was directly underneath, up went Tim's shovel, and down went the snow it held upon Fritz's head.

A wild yell escaped the Dutchman.

His stumpy legs flew up in the air, he turned a somersault, landed upon a snow bank Tim had just been making, and was buried out of sight.

"Oh, Lor!" chuckled Tim. "Wot a sockdolager!"

He danced around gleefully upon his good leg, and fairly bent himself double with laughter, when a crowd of boys came along and saw him.

But!

Bang!

Down!

From left, every lung and every loom was a snowball fired at the boys that struck Tim and caused a look of surprise to grow upon his face.

Overwhelmed by a volley that pelted him all over, the ancient mariner ceased to protect himself by hopping around about as nimbly and gracefully as an elephant, and a second shower came flying up at him.

"Murder!" he roared, "Blast yer fer a crew o' pirates! If I git my tackle on yer, shiver me, if I don't swab up ther sidewalk with yer—oh, oh!"

Just then he slipped and fell.

Down from the roof he plunged, and the boys became scared that he was going to get killed, and ran away very much alarmed.

Plunk! went Tim into the snow heap, out of which Fritz was just floundering, and although the wind was completely taken out of Tim's sails he was not injured by his fall.

"Donner-vetter!" roared Fritz, as the old sailor's wooden leg caught him in the pit of the stomach. "I vhas a det man!"

And over he went with Tim.

A struggle ensued between them, and the snow flew in all directions, when Fritz broke away and fled around the house.

With his eyes, ears, nose and mouth stuffed with snow, Tim scrambled out of the bank, and just then a man came in the gate.

In his excitement the old sailor did not even try to see who he was, as he thought it was Fritz, and he showered the man with snowballs as big as his fists, and pelted him with the force of bombshells.

"Hey!" shouted the stranger. "Stop that, you old fool! What are you firing at me for? Confound you, are you crazy?"

"Gosh!" muttered Tim, pausing, as he recognized the voice, and cast his solitary eye upon the man. "It's Captain Knox!"

Then he bowed humbly, and said in abashed tones:

"Beg parding, sir, but I thought as yer wuz Fritz."

"Is Jack Wright at home?" haughtily asked the man, scowling at Tim.

"Aye, sir, he's out in ther workshop lookin' over his new boat. Take that 'ere path ter ther right, sir, an' tack aroun' ter ther big brick buildin' in ther starn o' ther garding whar you'll run afoul o' him."

Wiping the snow from his neck, the captain passed on, angrily pulling his silk hat down over his eyes, and shrugging himself up within his seal-lined overcoat, while Tim glanced around in quest of Fritz to wreak vengeance upon him for what he had done.

No sooner, however, had the captain, with a dignified air, turned the corner of the house when he received a bucketful of freezing, cold water from the hands of the young Dutchman, who had been lying in wait there for Tim, as he expected pursuit from the old sailor.

A cry of fury pealed from the captain's lips as the water drenched him, and a scared look crossed Fritz's face as he saw his mistake.

He did not say a word, but discreetly took to his heels, when the captain uttered an imprecation and ran after him, with a thick cane in his gloved hand.

Just as Fritz reached the back yard, he slipped on an icy spot and fell, when Captain Knox rushed up to him and hissed furiously:

"I'll teach you to make a butt of me for your accursed practical jokes, you infernal Dutch hound!"

He struck at the prostrate Fritz with his cane, but raising his hand the Dutchman caught the descending cane, and held it firmly.

"Shtob a leedle!" panted Fritz. "Dot vhas all a misdake vonet, so help me cracious! Don'd hit a veller when he vhas down alretty!"

"I'll kill you!" screamed the captain, whose face was purple with anger, and contorted into a most fiendish expression, and he gave the handle of his cane a twist, a jerk, and out of the stick he withdrew a long, slender sword blade, which he drew back and aimed at Fritz.

The young Dutchman gulped down a big lump that seemed

to rise in his throat, and raising his hand entreatingly, he cried:

"Don't stab me! I didn't do nothing so bad dot you must do dot."

The captain was in a terrible passion, however, and in a moment more would have carried out his ugly intention had not Jack just then appeared, and rushed up to them, crying ringingly:

"Hold! Don't stab that boy, on your life!"

Click! Click! came the disagreeable sound of a pistol spring, and it brought the captain to his senses, and caused him to look around.

Jack stood a few paces away aiming a revolver at him, and his face turned pale, he gave a violent start of nervous dread, and then, assuming a false laugh, he lowered the sword-cane, and said in forced tones of jovial carelessness:

"Don't fire, Wright; it was all a joke!"

"Rather a serious looking joke," replied the boy dryly, as he put the pistol back in his pocket, and Fritz arose.

"Wasn't it a joke all around, Schneider?" queried the captain sharply.

"Yah! I tink so," Fritz could not help admitting, when he thought of the share he had played in the three-cornered game.

Jack looked surprised, and Fritz walked away and joined Tim.

"What brought you here so early this morning, may I inquire?" he asked, abruptly changing the subject to avoid a long discussion.

"I have come over to inspect the boat in which you intend to make the remarkable trip upon which we wagered last night," replied the captain, returning the sword into the cane-stick.

"You have just come at the right moment, then," said Jack, with a smile, "for I have been inspecting her myself a while ago.

"Indeed! Then she is already completed?"

"Every minute detail," replied the boy, "and she is ready for work."

A sneering smile crossed the captain's sallow face.

"I hope she will be a success," said he.

"Come into the shop, sir," said Jack. "I'll show her to you."

Knox walked after the boy through the door into the building, and within a huge flooded cellar he beheld Jack's latest creation floating in the water as lightly as a cork.

It was a cylinder, cigar-shaped, forty feet long, and made of a metal twice as strong and twice as light as steel, covered with a black varnish that made it much more slippery than lamp black, polished until it was as smooth and reflective as a mirror.

It was only ten feet in diameter at the broadest point, and tapered to needle-like ends. At the bow there was a slight elevation covered with thick glass for a pilot-house, on the deck there was a water-tight trap door surrounded by a light railing, along the side were three barred deadlights, and three indentations in each side gave play to as many propellers, while strung on a shaft below the stern were eight more.

It was a most remarkable looking boat, with not a superfluous bulge or other protuberance calculated to resist the water, and looked as if she might show a most wonderful rate of speed with such smooth runs and such an extraordinary lot of screws.

A triumphant thrill passed over Jack when he saw what a look of intense surprise and uncomfortable doubt of his own calculation that came over the narrow face of the white-headed captain.

It was evident that some belief was creeping into his mind that after all Jack might be right in his confidence in the

boat, which obviously was constructed more for strength and speed than anything else.

Knox scanned every inch of the Racer over very carefully and critically with an expert eye, and with a changed color and a voice that slightly shook with emotion, he turned to the boy, and said:

"It seems to me she ought to travel very fast."

"Acknowledge that you fear defeat?" laughed Jack.

"No, I won't do anything of the kind!" sharply replied Knox.

"You see, all her lines and outer attachments are built for speed?"

"Of course I do. How are the inside accommodations?"

"Come aboard and I'll show you," smiled Jack, covertly watching the other.

There was a bow and stern lines made fast to the boat; the water was kept from freezing by steam pipes, and Jack drew the boat over to the platform surrounding the flooded cellar.

They then leaped on her railed-in deck.

The only entrance was by means of the trap door, and lifting it up, Jack conducted the captain down the companionway into a small, empty room of metal with several water-tight doors in the walls.

Opening one of them, he led the captain into a magnificently arranged cabin, with a pantry on one side for cooking arrangements, a dead light on each side lighting it.

In back of this was a storeroom, containing metal diving suits, arms, ammunition, ropes, stores, and every requisite for a submarine trip, all lit up by two dead lights.

Within this room was a monkey of the small, red, howling species, named Whiskers, which Tim owned, and a green parrot called Bismarck, which Fritz owned, and they were both locked up in cages, for the old sailor and the Dutch boy meant to take them on the voyage with them.

The room in back of it was a storage room for the electro-motive force to drive the boat, which was supplied directly from a large dynamo by wires connected with a series of wheels that connected with the screw shafts.

Then they went to the front room in the boat, and found it to be fitted up with a wheel, a switchboard, on which were levers to control all the working parts of the boat, a number of gauges and indicators on the wall, and six handsome bunks curtained off at one side.

Knox could not help admiring the luxurious extravagance of every point, and frequently gave utterance to his delight.

"She must have cost a great deal of money," he remarked after they had examined everything, and Jack explained how the boat was operated, "for I see you have spared no expense."

"Over \$200,000," replied the boy.

"Isn't there a floor below this?"

"Yes, three rooms. They are filled with air. When I wish to send the Racer below the surface I turn this lever. It puts the pump in motion that drives the air from the central chamber into the two end ones. It is compressed in them. A vacuum is created in the middle chamber. Then, with this lever here I pump water into the middle chamber. Enough can be thus pumped in to sink the boat to any desired depth."

"I see."

"When down below only a very slight change of equilibrium or alteration of specific gravity is sufficient to produce a tendency to float. Sink a bladder full of air with a bag of shot just heavy enough to keep it at the bottom of a tub of water, and you will be surprised to see how few shot have to be removed to make it mount to the surface. You know how the shaking out of a sand bag makes a nicely balanced balloon ascend steadily in the air. Well, my boat was built on this principle, for by discharging very little water through

the narrowing of its metal shell. It is lightened and rises buoyantly."

"It is certainly the most wonderful, ingenious affair I ever saw," said Knox in reluctant tones, as if he hated to acknowledge the truth, "and I have got such confidence in the boat that I have not the least fear of venturing off on a long trip aboard of her."

"The force of her electro-motor," said Jack, "is great enough to send her along at the rate of a mile and a half a minute, or ninety miles an hour. But such a fearful strain, if kept up, might weaken her bow and ultimately crush it in like an eggshell. I shall not resort to such high pressure unless I am absolutely compelled to in case of delays."

The captain looked more surprised than ever at this admission and bit his lip with vexation upon finding that he would have an extra reserve guard of the boy's to combat in his self-imposed task of trying to prevent the boy from completing the trip on schedule time.

He merely elevated his eyebrows, but said nothing.

But he made a mental vow to not leave a loophole open by which the boy could gain his point, and beggar him.

More convinced than ever that his wager had been a most foolhardy one, and that the boy possessed a racing machine that stood a fair chance to win, he took his leave of the young inventor, to return to New York, and there lay his plans to defeat Jack at every point of vantage along the route.

He had not been gone long when Tim and Fritz joined Jack in the workshop, and began to discuss Captain Knox.

"In my opinion, he is an unscrupulous fellow," said Jack, "and as you both intend to go with me on this earth circling cruise, my advice to you both is to keep an eye upon him, for I am convinced that he will not lose an opportunity to try to thwart me and save his money."

"Keel haul ther lubber," said Tim. "I've got him sot down in my log book as an unprincipled villain, an' yer kin derpend as I ain't ter be fooled by him nohow."

"Und me, too," added Fritz, in solemn tones.

CHAPTER III.

A TREACHEROUS LETTER.

On the following day Jack received a letter from Knox asking for a map and details of the route, and sent them to him.

During the ensuing week Jack and his friends were kept very busy preparing the Racer for the trip, and the weather had so modified in the interval that the ice on the bay had thawed out.

The boy was glad of this, as it would now give clear passage to the boat from the shop to the sea.

On the day before that set for starting, every detail was attended to, and our friends had nothing more to do, and went into the house to supper, when the mail came in.

There was only one letter, postmarked New York, and it was handed to Jack while he and Tim and Fritz were in the library.

"It must be from Captain Knox," said Jack. "I remember his writing."

"Aw, I hopes as ther lubber ain't a backln' out," said Tim.

"If he does, dat don't been some longer!" granted Fritz.

Jack opened the letter and read it through.

A look of the most intense surprise overspread his face as he perused, and this expression turned into one of the utmost pain by the time he had finished perusing the epistle.

An expression of anger galled from his lips, and crush-

ing the letter in his hand he sank into a chair in such evident agitation that his two friends became alarmed.

"Wot's ther matter o' yer, lad?" anxiously questioned Tim. "Have anything happened ter upset yer this way?"

"By jingo!" was all the boy could gasp for a moment, and they saw that his eyes were glittering feverishly, while his face had turned as pale as death and was nervously twitching.

"Dot ledder vhas from Edvard Knox?" asked Fritz, curiously.

"It is," admitted the boy, recovering his composure; "but it was not intended for me. Such a scoundrel as that man is! Why, I ought to shoot the rascal as soon as I see him!"

"Wot have he done?" asked Tim, with a frown of piqued curiosity.

"He must have written several letters yesterday," answered Jack, meditatively, "and among them he must have written a letter to me. He probably directed several envelopes at the same time. But when inclosing the letters he by mistake has sent a letter to me meant for another person, and very likely sent to the other person the letter meant for me."

"Den you vhas got dot oder feller's letter?" asked Fritz, grinning.

"Exactly so. And it is fortunate for us that this mistake occurred, as you will discover when I read this letter to you."

"Heave ahead, then, lad," said Tim, who was burning with curiosity to learn the contents of the letter. "Don't keep us waitin' any longer."

Jack opened the letter, and read it aloud as follows:

"New York, Dec. 30, 18—.

"Mr. Samuel Barry, San Francisco, Cal.:

"Dear Sir:—I have wagered \$500,000 with the owner of a submarine boat that he cannot encircle the earth in twenty days in his vessel, but since making the bet I have fears of losing. In order to thwart the success of the undertaking, I must resort to sharp play, and as you and other captains of vessels in my employ have done work of a kindred nature for me before, I must call upon you again to aid me in this enterprise.

"My chief object is to prevent this boat making the trip on time, and for that reason, when you leave San Francisco for Hong Kong, I want you to keep a lookout for the boat, and use every means to prevent her going out from the Chinese coast toward Central America. I shall be on board of her, and shall see that she runs near you if we sight your vessel, the Wind Wave, during the passage.

"Should your assistance prove to be the means of my winning the wager, I shall pay you one-half of it, or \$350,000—a sum well worth striving to get. On the other hand, if I lose I will have nothing left, and you will lose your position, as a sequel. * * * (A long description of the Racer followed, with the course, instructions, etc., and the letter continued:)

"To-day I have telegraphed to the captains of three more of my vessels, in the same tenor as this, as follows:

"To Captain Henry Foretop, of the schooner Fire Bug, who is in London, to guard the Atlantic between Liverpool and New York; to Dick Mainstay, of the bark Happy Sally, at Alexandria in the Mediterranean, and soon to sail for New York; and to Ralph Missen, plying between this city and Vera Cruz on the brig Golden Star, to watch the Gulf of Mexico.

"By this means, I will have every course of the Ocean Racer watched, and if she were to escape one she is bound to fall in with another of my ships, and thus lose the race.

"In the interval, it is my intention to exercise while on board of her as a passenger every artifice that my ingenuity can devise to retard her progress, and, between us all, I am confident that Jack Wright, her owner, will lose his wager and enrich us both."

"Expecting your most earnest co-operation, and requesting that you destroy this letter, I remain, yours truly.

"Edward Knox.

"P. S.—Enclosed find map of the course.

E. K."

By the time Jack finished reading the treacherous letter his two friends were almost purple in their faces with rage and they ripped out a string of expletives that were strong enough to fill the room with a sulphuric haze.

"Well," said Jack, "what do you think of that?"

"Blast his timbers!" growled Tim, stumping up and down the room in the most violent agitation. "As soon's I gits my grappels on his figure head I'm a-goin' ter spile it fer him."

"Gif me a glub, all full of nails, vhen ve see dot sweiner hunt," begged Fritz. "Let me got him vhere somebody can't interfere mit us. I only vant ter hit him on her het dwice. I vill bay for der funeral."

Jack pondered a moment, then holding the letter up and placing it in the envelope, he put it in his safe, and said:

"I've got a better plan than that, boys."

"Wot is it?" demanded Tim. "Tar and feather ther lubber?"

"No; it is to keep mum and not let on that we know anything about his sweet intentions to baffle us."

"Mutter of Shiminey!" roared Fritz, whose pugnacious spirit was fully aroused. "Let dot brute go? I von't do id! I von't do id!"

"Listen," said Jack. "That letter proves his unfairness and guilt. If we lose it will condemn him and give us the bet any way, and send him to prison, disgraced and dishonored."

"By ther horned spoon o' Neptune, that's better," assented Tim.

"Yah! But I vant to proke his chaw on my own accounts," sputtered Fritz, shaking his fist under the old sailor's nose. "Don'd yer see dot I vhas grazzy? Don'd yer see dot I von'd rest easy by mine grafe after he drownts us, if I von't vipe der nose offer dot face of hisn?"

"Forewarned of his perfidious intentions," said Jack, calculatingly, "we can very easily baffle his plans, as we know what vessels to look out for. You see, we will be off before this Sam Barry can send word back that he received a letter meant for me, and as Barry won't know anything about the plot, we need not expect any trouble crossing the Pacific Ocean between Hong Kong and America. Knox won't know that we are aware of his rascality, and consequently won't expect we will be watching every move he makes night and day. The result will be that we can then more easily find out what tricks he may resort to, and thus more easily thwart him at every turn."

This logic cooled Fritz off, and although he swore he would give the schemer no peace, he could not help agreeing with the young inventor's view of the situation.

They talked the matter over at some length that night, and finally turned in with all their plans settled upon.

Next day they were up with the sun, and as it was a holiday, the people began to flock down to the bay to witness the departure of the Racer, for the news of the great wager had been reported in the newspapers and aroused everybody's interest.

Jack spent the greater part of the morning at calculating the time between ports, and figuring the speed in which the Greyhound could make it, barring accidents, and win the bet.

Before twelve o'clock the boy went on board of the boat with his two friends, and, starting one of the screws, he drove the Racer down the creek into the bay and up to the pier.

Every man, woman, boy and girl in Wrightstown was down to the water's edge to see the boat off, and they greeted

Jack's new invention with the wildest cheers when it appeared.

Upon the pier stood all the people who had attended the banquet, among whom were Edward Knox and the magistrate who held the stakes.

The captain was attired in a loud plaid traveling suit and cap, had a field glass slung over his shoulders, and carried a valise.

He tipped his hat coldly to Jack as the boat ran up alongside of the dock, and sprang upon the deck, while the scientists exchanged a friendly badinage with him and Jack.

The magistrate held his chronometer in his hand.

"Get ready, gentlemen," said he warningly. "You have not got much time to spare, for it is just one minute to twelve!"

Knox passed through the trap door, into the boat, and Jack turned the prow of the Racer toward the headland, while its rudder touched the spiles of the dock.

Every man who had a watch in that vast assemblage drew it out and intently consulted it.

A deathly silence followed.

Presently there came the shrill blast of a whistle from Jack's shop.

"Twelve o'clock!" every one cried.

"Go!" shouted the magistrate.

"I will be back at this hour on January 21st," shouted the boy.

The words were no sooner out of his mouth when Jack turned a lever which set every wheel on the boat in motion, and a tremendous yell pealed from the people, whistles screamed, bells clanged, guns boomed, and a tremendous din arose.

The Racer suddenly shot ahead.

She was launched on her long journey.

To the spectators it looked as if a cannon ball had suddenly shot across the surface of the water as they eyed her flight, but they did not have much chance to watch her, for almost before they knew it she shot out past the headland, and disappeared beyond on the sea.

Exclamations of amazement pealed from everybody's lips when they saw the marvelous rate of speed at which the boat whizzed through the water.

None were more surprised than Captain Knox.

"Wonderful!" he gasped. "But she can't keep it up."

"Why can't she?" queried Jack, turning the wheel and glancing around at him.

"Because her shaft bearings will get hot and break."

"They can't. I have guarded against that."

"They will wear out."

"Impossible. They are made of platinum!"

"Then she is bound to meet with some other accident."

"Never!" vehemently replied Jack, fixing a burning, significant glance upon the captain. "I have carefully weighed every detail, and guarded against all our weak spots. No accident can occur to this boat, unless it comes from the treachery of its inmates, sir."

The captain gave a violent start.

His thin, sallow face grew a trifle pale, and the veins began to swell up on his forehead with nervous apprehension.

"Can he suspect my design?" he thought.

He fastened a keen, searching glance upon Jack to see if he could detect any particular significance he might have attached to his remark, but the boy's features were as composed and bland as a Chinaman's.

"I suppose you got my letter, stating I would be here on time?" he asked.

"So that was what the letter said which he sent to Sam Barry!" thought the boy; then he said aloud: "Yes, I got your letter, sir, and I remember its contents yet."

CHAPTER IV.

A MAGNETIC DUMPLING.

Going along at the speed of sixty miles an hour, the course of the Racer was laid as straight as a dart for the south of the Azores, with Jack at the wheel, Tim beside him, and Fritz watching the machinery like a cat.

Captain Knox attempted to go back in the dynamo room, but the moment he touched the brass knob of the door, he received such an electric shock that almost knocked him down, and a sign working automatically, suddenly appeared on the panel in front of him, bearing the inscription:

NO ADMITTANCE.

He growled out an expletive and gingerly strode away, rubbing his hand, and began to unpack his trunk.

Withdrawing a small horseshoe magnet from it, he placed it within his pocket, lit a cigar, and went forward in the pilot-house.

There he took a seat and glanced around at the indicators, and finally let his gaze drop to the binnacle in front of Jack.

The compass was in a globe of steel upon a figured pedestal, and had a glass front and lamps upon either side.

His busy mind then began to work over a plan he had in view, when suddenly there came a sharp, piercing whistle through the engine room speaking tube.

Jack seized it, opened it, placed it to his mouth, and called:

"Hello, Fritz, what do you want?"

"Ouch, Gott! Come here, gwick! I vhas caught by der machinery!" bellowed the Dutch boy, in terrified accents.

Jack dashed out of the room, leaving the wheel in Tim's hands, and the captain followed him, but the young inventor shut the door after him, and with a disgusted look Knox sat down in the cabin.

"Balked again!" he muttered, chewing savagely at his cigar.

A moment afterwards he heard the piercing whistle again, and then the voice of Jack, crying hoarsely:

"Tim! Lash the wheel and come and help me, or Fritz will get crushed! I can't manage him alone."

The captain started, and an exultant look flashed in his eyes, for he saw that the very opportunity he craved for was about to be given him to get into the pilot-house alone.

A moment afterwards Tim came stumping out, and darting a keen glance with his solitary good eye at Knox, who seemed to be intent upon a book, he passed on.

The old sailor had scarcely vanished, when up jumped the captain, and swiftly gliding over to the cabin door, he entered the pilot-house and pulled the magnet from his pocket.

Pulling open the glass door of the binnacle, he dropped the magnet down into the compass box, under the card, and the lodestone affecting the needle, caused it to deviate from the pole several degrees, by which it was bound to guide the Racer far south of its course.

Satisfied with his evil work, the captain hastened back to the cabin with a sardonic smile upon his face and resumed his seat.

He had hardly settled himself, when Jack and Tim came in with Fritz, the sleeve of whose jacket was torn.

"What's the matter?" asked Knox, looking up at them.

"Fritz got his jacket sleeve caught between the cog of two revolvers," replied Jack, "and the machinery was slowly dragging him between its wheels when the life might have been crushed out of him, and he called me. We cut him free, and he had a narrow escape."

"Oh, was that all?"

"That's all enough, isn't it?" growled Fritz angrily.

Tim stumped into the wheel-house.

The captain shrugged his shoulders and laughed.

"I am disappointed," said he.

"What about?" asked Jack.

"I expected to hear that the Dutchman was dead."

"It is provoking to be so disappointed," said Jack, sarcastically; "but if you get caught in that same predicament perhaps your desire to hear of such a catastrophe may be gratified, sir."

"Pon my word, Wright, I believe you are correct," laughed the man, assuming a nonchalant exterior he did not feel. "Never mind, better luck next time, I trust."

Fritz began to prepare the table for supper, and Jack passed on into the pilot-house, leaving Knox teasing Whiskers.

"How did she go while we were absent from here?" asked Jack.

"Bad," replied the old sailor, gravely shaking his head. "Fell off five p'int's, an' dash me if so be as I kin understand it."

"Neither can I," said Jack, his suspicions aroused at once, "for the wheel is self-regulating, even if lashed, once a course is given. There must be something wrong somewhere. Was it tampered with?"

"Lor', no. I knows werry well jist how I lef' it tied."

Jack glanced at the sun, and then at the compass with a troubled expression upon his clear face, and said:

"When we left here, the sun was divided by that window bar; now it is out of sight on the port side, showing that we must be going far south of the course pursued a few minutes ago."

"Such a change couldn't happen in ten minutes," said Tim.

"Of course not."

"Aye, but ther compass says I'm right?"

"Maybe the compass lies!" said Jack.

"Never!"

"I'll examine it, anyway."

He opened the binnacle globe, and peered in.

And the first thing he saw was the horseshoe magnet.

A dark look crossed the boy's face.

"Look there!" he exclaimed, pointing at it.

"Treachery, by thunder!" gasped Tim.

"Hush! Do not say a word!" whispered the boy.

He made a hook of a piece of wire, and fished the horseshoe magnet out of the binnacle, and put it in his pocket.

The needle, released of the influence of the lodestone, at once resumed its normal condition, and Tim changed the boat's course.

"Do you see how it happened now?" asked the boy.

"Aye, aye! This are some o' Knox's dirty work."

"Of course. We have lost nearly ten miles."

"That's bad," said Tim seriously.

"Oh, we can make it up. Shut the window and I'll show you."

Tim obeyed and Jack turned a lever on the switchboard, when the Racer dashed ahead so fast that the sea seemed to be flying past them like lightning, there came a fearful shrieking of the wind about the boat, and with her bow above the sea and her stern submerged she fairly flew.

Jack glanced up at one of the log indicators.

It registered the phenomenal rate of ninety miles an hour!

Had the window been open it is doubtful if our friends could have caught their breath, so hard would the wind have rushed in.

On, on, on sped the boat upon her proper course again for three quarters of an hour, shaking from the violence of her speed as if in the grasp of a giant.

By the end of that time she had more than gained the ten miles she lost, and Jack reduced her to sixty miles again.

"Going at that awful velocity," said the boy, "if we were to

strike a wooden ship accidentally this boat would pass through its hull like a cannon ball."

"Aye, an' smash us ter pieces, I s'pose?" said Tim.

"No, it would do us no harm, for the bow is like a needle, and of such enormous strength that a cannon ball could not injure it fired only fifty feet away. This may seem a strong assertion, but it is true, as you can easily figure when you reckon what strength I had to put in the bow to overcome the awful pressure it is put to by the high speed at which we constantly run.

"I don't doubt it," said Tim. "Ain't I seen more powerful wuss things nor that? Lor', when I wuz in ther navy aboard o' ther United States frigate Wabash, along wi' yer father we once sighted a Confederate ship, an' signaled her to haul to. She wouldn't obey orders, so wot should ther captain do but fire on her. We wuz near ther coast, an' thar wuz a rocky bluff stickin' out in ther sea, behind wot ther Confederate sailed. Our draught wuz too great ter let us folly, when wot do yer think we did?"

"I have no idea," answered Jack, with a weary sigh.

"Fired a shot from our eight-inch gun at ther cliffs, an' keel hau' me, sir, if that ere ball didn't pass through seven hundred feet o' solid granite, hit ther enemy's ship, blow her ter smithereens, an'——"

"Rats!" bawled Bismarck just then, interrupting Tim's lie.

A disgusted look swept over Tim's face, and he flung a book at the bird, and missing it caught Fritz on the nose, just as he came in to announce supper was ready.

For a few moments a red-hot altercation followed, and with a laugh Jack left the pilot-house and went into the galley.

Captain Knox was already at the table, and Fritz and Jack joined him, when the meal progressed amicably, served up on plates lettered expressly for each individual present, pursuant of a fancy of Jack's.

Tim remained in the pilot-house.

Presently Fritz brought in apple dumplings for dessert, and the captain cut his open, when out of it fell a small horsehoe magnet in his dish.

His eyes opened, and he turned ghastly as he regarded it.

"Wh—wh—what's this?" he managed to stammer at last.

"What?" queried Jack, simulating the most innocent surprise.

"It's a magnet!" blurted out Fritz in amazement.

"How very careless of you, Fritz, to cook it up in the captain's dumpling!"

"But I didn'd. Ve don'd got dose kind of tings on board of dis boat."

"Oh, it don't make any difference," said the captain coolly, as he recovered and shot a murderous glance at Jack. "I have got enough supper without eating it."

He saw at once what it implied, but acted the part of an innocent lamb.

CHAPTER V.

THE FIRE-BUG.

The moon and stars arose over the heaving sea that night, but did not stay long, for dark, threatening cloud banks soon swept up, obscuring the sky and portended a storm.

Jack resolved to stand the first watch alone, as all the machinery was in prime working order and was self-lubricating.

His two friends had scarcely gone into their stateroom, though, when Edward Knox strolled into the pilot-house, puffing away at a fine Havana cigar, and leisurely flinging him-

self upon a couch, he crossed his legs and said in bland tones:

"I'll keep you company, Wright."

"Kind of you, I'm sure," replied the boy dryly; "but I'd just as lieve be alone."

"That isn't flattering my company," said the man, with a wicked flash in his dark, burning eyes. "But never mind. I know you are too much of a gentleman to directly insult a guest of yours. Let it pass. I'll make you a proposition."

"What is it?"

"Let me find employment here to break the confounded monotony."

"Every position is occupied."

"Nonsense. I could help with the machinery, or——"

"That department is wholly under the control of Fritz."

"Can't I keep watch with you for company's sake?"

"You can do that if you like."

"All right. Twenty days of idleness would kill me, I'm sure. I can handle a wheel and navigate a boat with skill and experience."

"No doubt; but during our watch I will attend to that part."

"What in blazes can I do, then?" blankly demanded the captain.

"Keep a lookout," laughed Jack, tickled at the lengthening of his face.

"Very well. But, say, how is she going?"

"Sixty knots an hour, steadily."

"Didn't lose any?"

"To-day she did, ten miles, but I easily made it up."

Knox glanced at the clock, and began to nervously figure.

"It's ten o'clock now," said he, "and we have been running ten hours. We must be six hundred miles from Wrightstown now."

"Exactly," smiled Jack. "Look at my log indicator up on the wall there. It registers up to 50,000 miles, and the hands, as you see, point exactly at six hundred."

"By Jove, we must be flying like lightning! Say, do you intend to keep right on this way all night long through the darkness and the storm that is impending, running the risk of colliding with passing ships or other obstructions that might get in our way?"

"Of course," assented Jack. "How do you expect me to win your money if I don't? Now, if you intend to help me station yourself at the window, and I will throw some light ahead."

The captain walked over in front of Jack, and the boy turned a lever, whereupon a broad streak of brilliant radiance shot out a mile ahead through the gloom from the searchlight upon the pilot-house, lighting up the gloomy sea.

In its brilliant glare everything was plainly revealed, and a cry of wonder and admiration burst from the captain's lips.

"The power you have got in that thing is wonderful!" he cried.

"It is equal to 50,000 candle power," replied Jack.

"Your battery must be unlimited."

"It is, for the reason that a small water engine I have keeps the dynamo at high pressure continually."

The captain glanced ahead, and gave a cry of alarm.

"Hold on!" he gasped. "What is that athwart our bows?"

"By jingo, an iceberg!" exclaimed Jack.

In one minute the Racer would have crashed into it, or, by turning right or left, he would lose a mile.

With one glance the boy measured the height of the majestic mountain of ice, and thought that it was about one hundred feet high.

As icebergs were about two-thirds submerged, Jack calculated that there must be about two hundred feet of it under water.

He had lost one minute to work in, and turning a lever that filled the water chamber with brine, compressing the air into the fore and aft reservoirs, he sent the Racer beneath the sea.

Down glided the boat at an angle, the pumps working furiously, and in less than a minute they were at the required depth to go beneath the berg.

This boat was so constructed that the difference of pressure was not at all noticeable, although they were suddenly plunged into a pressure of 90 pounds to the square inch.

Normally, on the surface, this pressure is only 15 pounds, and the collective difference may therefore be imagined.

Jack glanced out of the window.

Ahead shot the searchlight, cutting through the water like a knife, and the boy saw the smooth-washed base of the gigantic berg floating a few feet above the deck of the Racer, as she shot along as swiftly as she did upon the surface.

"Help!" yelled the startled captain. "We are going down!"

He rushed across the room, stumbled and fell.

It was all done so quickly he was taken by surprise.

Jack stopped the further descent of the boat and laughed.

"Don't get frightened!" he said. "We are all right!"

"H-h-how d-d-do you m-m-mean?" stammered Knox, who had burst into a cold sweat, and was trembling like an aspen.

"Why, do you forget that this is a submarine boat?" laughed Jack, upon seeing how unnerved Knox was.

"Oh, yes—so it is!" he admitted, scrambling to his feet and looking out of the window distrustfully yet. "Still, a fellow can't get used to this sort of thing all of a sudden, you know."

"See, we have passed the berg!"

"By Jove, this is remarkable! How is it we can breathe down here?"

"Because there is plenty of air stored in the boat."

"How long will it last us four?"

"About a week."

"Are you sure she don't leak?"

"Not a drop."

"And can't founder?"

"Positive of it."

The captain gained courage with this assurance, and glanced around, but failed to find any water making ingress.

"What a weak-nerved, cowardly fool I was, to be sure!" he said, self-reproachfully. "The sight of these marine wonders is queer, isn't it? Great heavens, what unheard of denizens of the deep there are. Wright, don't the sight thrill you?"

"It used to several years ago, but I'm accustomed to it now."

The captain stared and stared out of the window, where thousands of fishes of all sizes and kinds were passed by as the boat sped along, and then he asked:

"How about that storm up above—do we feel it?"

"No; that is, we may get a slight tremor from any very big waves that might arise," answered Jack.

"But the boat don't go any slower down here?"

"Of course not. Don't you know why English cutter yachts are built so low in the water? The pressure of the water is less resistance than the pressure of the air on the surface."

The captain looked surprised.

His admiration of Jack's ingenuity was rapidly increasing, although he was just as determined as ever to baffle him.

"There isn't any danger of striking sunken rocks or similar objects down here, is there?" he asked, after a pause.

"None whatever," replied the boy. "We are in deep water, as we are in the track of the Gulf Stream. A plummet would go down about 5,000 fathoms below us, or about 30,000 feet. There is a marked bed of the sea on a chart varying from 3,000 to 4,000 fathoms depth, extending from the south of

Newfoundland to the Bermudas. The fact is, that the greatest depth of the sea don't exceed five miles. So you see, we are crossing one of its deepest trenches or valleys; rocks bigger than high mountains would have to rise up to hit us. We ain't apt to find any such pinnacles till we near Cape de Verde Islands."

"What is the distance from Wrightstown to Gibraltar?"

"It is 3,240 miles to The Azores, and 3,300 to the place you named."

"By to-morrow night you expect, then, to reach The Azores, going at 60 miles?"

"Yes, and on the following evening we will reach Gibraltar."

"Across the Atlantic in two days and a half—bosh!"

"You shall see," replied Jack confidently.

They kept up this style of conversation until 3 o'clock in the morning, when Fritz and Tim were awakened to assume duty, and they turned in.

On the following morning at nine Jack was up again, and after breakfast the boat was raised to the surface.

All traces of the storm had disappeared, there was a bright sun and a clear sky overhead, and a gentle swell on the sea.

Breakfast was partaken of, and Jack went into the pilot-house, when Tim, who held the wheel, announced a sail in sight.

Jack took down a binocular and leveled it at the distant craft.

He soon arrived near enough to make her out to be a large schooner, and just then Knox came in and saw her.

He gave a violent start.

"It's the Fire Bug!" he exclaimed, involuntarily.

The vessel in sight was one of his own crafts, the captain of which Jack knew had orders to delay the Racer.

CHAPTER VI.

LOSING GROUND.

Jack bitterly regretted having sent Edward Knox the map of their course a week before the start was made.

The boy had planned out the most direct way to reach the points of destination quickest, and when he forwarded a copy to the captain, that individual had dispatched copies to each of his captains.

For that reason it would be no trouble for any of them to meet with the Racer, as they would know just where to look for her.

Judging by his receipt of Knox's letter to Captain Foretop, the boy inventor realized at once how they happened to meet the Fire Bug, and her presence athwart the Racer's course plainly showed Jack that her skipper had received Knox's instructions, and meant to carry them out.

But how was the Fire Bug to delay the Ocean Racer?

Jack scornfully laughed at the absurdity of doing such a thing.

He turned to Captain Knox, and said:

"How do you know the name of that boat is the Fire Bug, sir?"

The captain gave a guilty start, and looked confused.

But he was quick witted.

And he replied:

"Oh, I ought to know my own property when I see it!"

"True. And isn't that a rowboat with several men in it off to the windward?"

"So it is," said the captain, with a puzzled, yet gratified look. "I wonder what they can be doing in her, Wright."

"I'm as perplexed as you are."

"See—the crew of the schooner is signaling to us."

"Haven't got time to attend to them, Knox."

"But it may be important."

"Delays are dangerous. I can't attend to them. We will pass close, and hear what they say."

The captain began to betray every sign of nervousness.

He nibbled at his finger nails, paced to and fro, the muscles around the corners of his mouth began to twitch, and he breathed in deep gasps, for he feared that the skipper of the Fire Bug could do him no good.

On shot the Racer, never abating her speed, and she arrived on a line with the schooner, all the crew of which were leaning over the bulwarks, signaling the strange looking boat.

Not more than fifty yards separated the Racer from her, and Jack steered his boat to pass between the Fire Bug and the quarter-boat, when suddenly the prow of the racer struck something.

There came a thud, the water flew up in showers, the quarter-boat capsized, and the schooner suddenly swung around.

As for the Racer, she started ahead, curved around and around in circles, and the wheels suddenly ceased to revolve.

Jack instantly shut off power.

He saw that his boat had run into a large, strong seine net which had been stretched between the schooner and the quarter-boat.

It was all submerged but the edge, which was floated, and the report had come when the Racer tore it loose from the schooner.

The submarine boat might have gone through it, but the flying screws caught the broken ropes, and their revolutions twisted the ropes around the shafts and propeller blades, jamming them so that they could not revolve any longer.

It was a cunning trick.

The captain of the Fire Bug had evidently calculated every point to a nicety, as his plan had worked so successfully.

He had ample time to prepare the trap, his glass having showed him the Racer over fifteen miles away, and by his signals to the young commander of the racer, he had drawn the boat near enough to his schooner to cause her to plunge into the net.

There were a thousand chances of his failing.

Had Jack been under water, or had the boy seen the net, he would not have been caught.

Fortune, however, seemed to favor the conspirators.

The boat was not injured, but she was rendered temporarily helpless.

Fritz and Tim ran into the pilot-house.

"Holystone my scuppers!" roared the old sailor, "but we've been stopped!"

"We are the victims of foul play!" said Knox, assuming an alarmed look, while a thrill of intense joy passed over him.

"Vat ve vhas hit—a whale?" demanded Fritz, glaring out of the window.

"It looks as if we were enveloped in a net," quietly said Jack.

"These sailors must have been fishing," glibly explained Knox, turning to Jack. "You saw them signaling us, and you refused to listen to them. If you had done so, as I requested, this accident might not have happened. You should not be so obstinate in future, Wright. You can't blame the fellows. No doubt they were signaling us to look out for the net."

"It looks as if they were fishing for us," dryly answered the boy.

"How suspicious you are, to be sure."

"Boys, we must get rid of those tangled ropes," said Jack to his friends.

"Aye, lad, but ter do so we'll have ter go under water," said Tim.

"You remain here with Mr. Knox," said Jack. "Fritz, come with me."

"Ve vhas got off dem ropes wit four shooks by a goat's tail," said Fritz.

Jack darted a significant look at Tim, which the old sailor understood to imply that he was to keep his good eye upon their passenger.

The boy then left the pilot house with Fritz.

Upon reaching the storeroom, they attired themselves in diving suits, armed themselves with knives and two wire ladders, and went upon deck through the trap door.

They then saw that the schooner had swung up into the wind's eye, and observed that one of the boats was lowered, manned, and pulled off to the rescue of the swimming crew of the capsized boat.

It was very evident that one end of the net had been fastened to the schooner and the other end to the overturned boat.

Jack fastened the hooks in the ends of the ladder to ring-bolts in the deck and let it drop down the side over the port propeller forward.

Fritz did the same thing on the starboard side.

Then they went down the ladders under water, and saw how the screws were stuck by the snarled pieces of broken rope.

Vigorously using their knives, they cut away the impediments, and going up to the deck again they unhooked the ladders, moved them amidships and removed the tangle from the other wheels.

Then they severed the bindings of the after screws, port and starboard, and crept out on the end of the cylinder astern to free the rudder and the eight propellers working on the keel rod.

While they were under water so engaged, the second boat had rescued the capsized crew, and righting their skiff put them aboard of it, after which both boats were pulled toward the Racer.

Tim did not see them as they approached from the stern, and to keep his attention, Captain Knox had raised a dispute with him.

As soon as the two boats reached the submarine boat they separated, and each going to the sides of the Racer they caught hold of the wire ladders and towed the boat alongside of the schooner.

There they made her fast by the wire ladders, and the captain leaped on the deck with a hammer and pounded the hook points down, clenching them to the ring-bolts, and startling Jack and his friends.

By that time the boy and Fritz had succeeded in getting rid of the tangled ropes, and hearing the pounding came up on deck.

They were amazed to see their boat firmly secured to the schooner, back on the deck of which the captain had now clambered.

Owing to a telephonic contrivance in the helmets, the divers could speak and hear each other plainly, and Jack pointed at the wire ladders, and remarked angrily:

"They have got us fast there, Fritz."

"Och, himmel!" exclaimed the Dutch boy. "Vot iss? Ve vhas brisoners?"

"We are, and the rascals have got their schooner under way, and are dragging us back the way we came from."

"Stob dem, den. Oh, holy chee, vy yer don'd do something alretty?"

"Go down in the boat and bring me a saw. I'll cut the ladders."

"But looker dere, vonet!"

Fritz pointed at half a dozen sailors standing in a line at the bulwark of the Fire Bug, armed with rifles, which they aimed at the boys.

"Go below into your boat!" roared Captain Roretap just then.

"What for?" quietly questioned the boy.

"If you try to get away from us we will fire at the first one who dares to lay a hand upon those ladders!"

"He is either very loyal to Knox, anxious to keep his position as captain of that schooner, or eager to gain the reward!" muttered Jack.

"I dink he vhas all tree, neider!" said Fritz, and he went below.

"Well," roared the skipper, "why don't you follow him?"

"Explain what you mean by this outrage!" coldly answered Jack.

"I won't explain anything."

"Then I shall not obey you, sir."

Just then Fritz returned with the saw, and Jack began to cut away the ladders, when the desperate sailors, prompted by visions of a fat reward, fired at the two navigators.

The shock knocked them over, but so strong were their diving suits that not a ball penetrated the silvery white metal.

"They can't hurt us!" said Jack, with a laugh; "but they make it very inconvenient, I must say, and I am going inside."

"Don't yer do so?" raved Fritz excitedly. "If you vhas askeert of dem led me cut de vires, und ve soon got away."

"No; it isn't cowardice. I've got a better plan to thwart them."

"Vot is?"

"Come below and you will see."

The crew of the Fire Bug were amazed to observe that they were uninjured, and an exultant cry pealed from their lips as they saw the two divers go down through the trap and close it after them, for they considered themselves masters of the situation.

The schooner kept dragging the boat along backward, and our friends were losing time and ground; but Jack did not despair.

CHAPTER VII.

BAFFLED AGAIN.

As soon as Jack and Tim got down below, the young inventor procured a wrench, and they went into the dynamo room.

The stems of the ring-bolts passed through the shell of the boat, and were fastened upon the inside by nuts which Jack now proceeded to unscrew, and as soon as that was done, he knocked the ring-bolts out of the holes, and severed the ladders thus from the Racer.

"Tim, start the boat!" Jack shouted through the speaking tube.

"Aye aye, sir!" came the cheery reply.

Tim turned a lever, grasped the wheel, and away shot the boat as the screws were now in proper working order.

All the crew of the Fire Bug were amazed to see the boat dart away, leaving the ladders in their possession, and as soon as they recovered from their astonishment they fired a volley after the Racer, which Tim had put upon her course again.

One of the bullets shattered a glass in one of the starboard deadlights, and the rest rained harmlessly against the dark hull of the boat.

Away went the Racer, and Knox's jaw dropped.

"Baffled again!" he growled.

In a minute the Fire Bug was left astern.

"The quickest way is the best way," laughed Jack. "We

had no time to stop and give those minions of a scoundrel the thrashing they deserved."

He ordered Fritz to put new ringbolts in the holes, and a new plate of glass in the shattered deadlight.

Then he went up into the pilot-house, where he found Tim grinning with joy, and the captain pulling a very long, glum face.

"Hooray!" roared Tim, slapping his thigh. "How did yer do it?"

"With just a little Yankee cuteness," said Jack.

"'Pon my honor, Wright," exclaimed the captain, "you outwitted that scamp famously. The captain and crew must have been crazy to have played such a contemptible trick upon you."

"It was your boat, too, strange to say," remarked Jack.

"Yes, of course."

"If your captain's design had succeeded you would have won the bet."

"Of course," blandly replied Knox, with a nod.

"Don't it look queer, to say the least, captain?"

"I hope," said Knox, bristling up with assumed indignation, "that you don't insinuate that this is the result of a preconcerted plot?"

"My dear fellow, I don't insinuate," replied Jack. "When it comes time to accuse a man of having done any wrong, I openly call him to account. And, mark you, he invariably suffers for it."

"Hooray!" said Tim, who thought he was expected to applaud.

"That's a very sensible plan," said Knox, forcing a smile. "But, of course, you can't help seeing how absurd it would be to suspect me of knowing anything about my captain's plans. Recollect that he was in Europe—probably on the sea homeward bound—when we made our wager, and, therefore, could not have known anything about it."

"That seems plausible," said Jack, in order to dismiss the subject.

"Aye," interposed Tim, with a sly wink of his remaining eye, "but thar is sich things as telegrafs."

The captain started and flushed.

He glared at Tim, and the old sailor glared back at him.

"Eferyding vhas fixed, Shack," said Fritz, entering just then.

"How much time have we lost?" queried the boy.

"Fifty minutes," replied Tim, glancing at the chronometer.

"Which is equal to fifty miles. We must make up for lost time. Increase the power, Tim, and let her drive for all she is worth."

Jack closed the window, and Tim put on full speed, when the boat slipped along so swiftly that had a ship been passing the people on board would scarcely have had time to see it ere it would be gone.

The wind began to bellow, the boat began to rattle, up went her bow, down went her stern, and away she flew, leaving a wake of white foam stretching out astern like the graceful curves of a great serpent.

Every one of the propellers was revolving, and every seventh wave lifted the boat for an instant upon its crest, when the screws were elevated above the water, and emitted such a fearful series of buzzing shrleks as they fanned the air that the sound could be heard for miles across the sea.

"By Jove!" gasped Knox, sitting down in a chair and desperately grasping its arms. "I have ridden on express trains at the rate of a mile a minute, and thought it fearful, but this is twice as bad. Just look at the sea and sky. There are no shapes to them—they look like two blurs."

"Oh, pahaw!" scoffed Tim, "that ain't nothin'!"

"It isn't?" wildly ejaculated Knox. "Have you ever ridden as fast before?"

"Aye—on this werry trip."

"Indeed!"

"An' I once rode faster."

"You did?"

"Aye, aye, sir," asserted Tim solemnly.

"Impossible!"

"Shall I prove it?"

"By all means."

"It happened aboard the United States frigate Wabash," continued Tim.

Jack and Fritz hastily vanished from the room.

They could not stand Tim's yarn.

But the old sailor did not observe it, and continued, reflectively:

"We wuz stationed off Algeria, ther time o' ther corsairs, an' held ther city in siege wi' our guns. Ther commander sent me ashore to demand ther surrender o' ther city from ther Dey. I went up ter ther fortress an' told him wot I wanted, when he ups an' gits his grapnels on me.

"'Here's my answer,' says he, an' wi' that he tied me to ther end o' a fence post an' rammed ther t'other end o' it to a gun an' fired it."

A skeptical look began to mantle Knox's face.

"Away I wuz blowed," continued Tim, taking a fresh chew of plug, "an', sir, in jest one minute I hit ther water exactly one hunderd and fifty miles to ther wind'ard in ther Mediterranean Sea."

"And you was killed, of course?"

"Lor' bless you, no! I came up an' floated wi' ther post till my messmates rowed arter me an' picked me up."

"That was much faster time than we are making now," said Knox dryly, as he looked at the old sailor out of the corner of his eyes.

"I reckon it wuz," said Tim, who firmly believed every word he uttered. "On another 'casion we wuz——"

"Oh, that sample will do," said Knox hastily.

Whiskers, the old sailor's little pet monkey, came hopping in just then with a small roll of dough, made up for a loaf of bread, which Fritz had prepared for baking, and Knox left the room.

Tim glanced at the stolen dough, when, to his amazement, he saw the head of Fritz's pet parrot, Bismarck, sticking out of it.

The little imp had found the parrot with its talons caught in it, and, with fiendish glee, proceeded to scald it with a can of hot water.

Tired of this, he rolled the parrot in the sticky dough, and lifting it in his arms, he bolted out of the kitchen with it just as Fritz entered.

The young Dutchman gave chase, and Whiskers fled, trying to fling the dough-encased parrot away.

In this he failed, for the flour and water stuck to his hair, and he had to carry the roll involuntarily, or fall a victim to Fritz's wrath.

The parrot began to yell, and Whiskers chattered, and then he sought for protection with Tim.

"Hello!" said the old sailor, in amazement. "Wot are you got thar?"

Whiskers squeaked and chattered and punched the parrot's head, and Fritz rushed in, boiling with wrath, and armed with a broom.

"Where iss dot son-of-a-monkey cook?" he roared, flourishing his weapon. "Gief me dot Whiskers till I dwist his tail!"

"Haul to thar, blast yer ribs!" shouted Tim, in exasperation. "I ain't goin' ter 'low no oakum-headed, pot-bellied, Dutch galoot ter sail a-foul o' my leetle messmate."

"Vat are you got ter say about dot somedimes?" growled

Fritz, and with a sweeping thump he caught Whiskers a crack on the head that knocked him and the parrot apart.

"I'll show yer!" said Tim, as he pulled Fritz's accordion from under the binnacle, and raised his wooden peg to kick the wind out of it.

Whizz! came the broom through the air, and the old sailor got it square in the face, when the young Dutchman sprang forward and jammed Whiskers into a can of oil.

Then grasping his accordeon in one hand and his imprisoned parrot in the other, he darted out of the door and vanished.

When Tim recovered from his momentary confusion, he raved and swore like a pirate, but he dared not leave the wheel an instant to pursue his tormentor, and had to spend his wrath in malignant glares, muttered threats, and consoling words to Whiskers, who came out of the can looking as forlorn as a drowned rat.

The Racer tore along for two hours at the top of her speed, and then Tim brought her to her regular speed.

The day passed, and when night came they sighted The Azores off to the northward, and realized that they had covered 2,240 miles.

Such a wonderful record had never been made before, and it made Captain Knox restless and fidgety.

He began to get desperate, for it seemed as if the boy was bound to win the wager despite all odds against him.

Twice he had been baffled in his attempts thus far to interfere seriously with the progress of the Racer, and he felt as if he would certainly be beggared if Jack Wright's phenomenal good luck kept up, and nothing was done to thwart him.

"I won't be beaten!" he hissed, when he turned in. "I'll hatch a new scheme, and I swear, by Heaven, that I'll win yet!"

CHAPTER VIII.

STRIKING AN OBSTRUCTION.

"Boys, there's the rock of Gibraltar! We are across the Atlantic!"

"In fifty-five hours we have made 3,300 miles.

"Shiver me if we ain't at ther mouth o' ther Mediterranean, then!"

"Shiminey Christmas! Vot's der matter mit us?—noting!"

First Jack, then Knox, then Tim, then Fritz spoke, and as the pale, silvery moonlight reflected down upon the sparkling blue waters of the sea, at seven o'clock in the evening, the Racer sped into the strait, and barely missed colliding with an outcoming ship.

She sped on, and dashed out of sight of the amazed crew before they had a chance to clearly distinguish what she really was.

Ahead of them they had a run of thirty-one hours and thirty minutes to reach the Suez Canal—a distance of about 1,840 miles from Gibraltar to Port Said.

By this time the navigators had become accustomed to the fearful rush of the boat, and enjoyed its exhilarating influence greatly.

Here and there they saw boats dotting the water, lazily drifting on with the wind, their crews watching the flying submarine boat in the utmost amazement as it whizzed by them.

Jack was at the wheel, and Knox stood at the window with a cigar in his mouth gazing out at the rugged Spanish coast, when suddenly there came a fearful report from a gun on the fortress.

Jack looked out again, but could not distinguish anything on account of the sand being stirred up so furiously.

The young Dutchman limped out of the room, trying to recover his wits.

"Whar does all o' that sand in ther water come from?" asked Tim.

Again Jack shook his head in a mystified way.

"It is evident that we are on a shoal," he remarked.

They waited for the water to clear.

In the meantime Fritz returned, and reported:

"Nodings vot I could seen vhas proke somedimes."

This was some consolation, at least.

Jack was wild with impatience.

Every moment they delayed was fatal.

Of course Knox was glad of it, but he did not say anything.

Presently the sand settled, and Jack was enabled to distinguish objects ahead of the boat, when a most startling sight met his view.

"Look there!" he cried, pointing ahead despairingly.

The Racer had struck what looked to be a sand bar.

It would have been easy to raise her off it but for one reason.

On the other side of the bar there was a reef, and her prow had plunged against the coral so hard that it was jammed far into it, and it stuck there so tenaciously that she could not be moved an inch. The three friends glanced blankly at one another.

Captain Knox chuckled.

CHAPTER IX.

EATEN ALIVE.

"We are in a fix now," remarked Jack despairingly.

"It looks as if you might lose your bet," said the captain gleefully.

"I admit it. Still I am going to try very hard to win."

"How under the sun are you going to liberate the Racer?"

"By blowing away the coral from around her prow."

"Which, my dear boy, will occupy oceans of time."

"I don't believe it, sir."

"Won't she back out of the place?"

"No; she is too firmly wedged in, sir."

"Well, I, of course, hope we will remain here a week."

"Naturally," said Jack, with an anxious smile; "but we won't!"

He went into the storeroom and put on a diving suit, then he opened the ammunition box and withdrew several empty cylinders.

Having taken a can out of the box, he poured a small quantity of a white powder into each one of the shells, and screwed on the cylinder caps.

This powder he called horrorite, as he had invented it.

It was a high explosive of ten times greater force than dynamite.

Having loaded the shells, he took a coil of insulated wire, cut off several pieces, and fastened one end of each to a binding post at the extremity of each of the cylinders.

He then bunched the other ends, joined them to a single long wire, and went out into the water compartment, into which he shut himself.

Filling it with water, he went up the stairs to the trap, opened it, and passed out on deck.

There was a binding post on the front of the pilot-house, to which he fastened the end of the wire, and as the searchlight was reflected upon the reef ahead of the boat, he proceeded toward it.

Jumping down upon the sandy bottom, Jack proceeded across the bar to the reef, and examined the orifice into which his boat had crashed, imbedding several yards of the prow.

It held the boat like a vise.

The boy found plenty of suitable openings, into which he planted the bombs, and having distributed them so that they would blow away the coral without injuring the boat, he retreated to the pilot-house.

One of the windows was furnished with an audiphone, by which his friends could hear all he said inside of the boat, while the helmet he wore was provided in the same manner.

"Tim!" he shouted, pausing at the window.

"Aye, aye, sir," cheerily replied the ancient mariner.

"Turn lever No. 7."

"Are ther cartridges ready?"

"Yes."

Tim obeyed him.

A sullen, smothered roar followed.

A tremendous upheaval was seen at the reef, the water became fearfully agitated, and there came a great concussion that almost flung Jack down upon the ground.

Tons upon tons of sand were mixed up in the water again, blurring everything so that it was impossible to see an inch ahead.

That part of the reef in which the bombs had been planted was blown to fragments, and the boat was not only released from the clutch of the coral, but the fearful shock drove her backwards.

"Good!" exclaimed the boy jubilantly. "Thus far I haven't lost half an hour. In five minutes more we will be on our way again."

He waited till the sand had settled, and then, seeing that the boat was only scraped by some of the flying particles, he got upon the deck again.

Starting toward the trap to re-enter the boat, he was brought to a sudden pause by observing a gigantic calamary come over the side.

It was an enormous creature, and espying the boy it shot out one of its long tentacles toward him.

"Heavens!" gasped Jack, springing backward.

The monster's arm struck him, however, and in an instant its sinuous, snake-like coils were wound around his body, and one of its cup-like suckers attached itself to his metal clothing.

There was no getting away from the fearful grip by struggling, so the boy ceased to fight against it, and shouted:

"Help! Help!"

He did not expect to encounter any such monster and have to fight for his life, and therefore had come out unarmed.

His voice sounded smothered and dull beneath the water, and he was afraid his friends would not hear it.

The squid was fully twenty feet in length, of an elongated form, firm, fleshy, tapering, and flanked toward the end by two triangular fins.

The mouth was furnished with eight arms, and the creature had the power of diffusing a dark-colored liquid around it on provocation, like the cuttle-fish, and it was of a bluish color, speckled with purple, while its demeanor was absolutely ferocious.

It had enormous glaring eyes in back of its tentacles.

Seized by the spider-like creature, Jack was drawn toward it, and suddenly became conscious of a fearful suction.

A thrill of terror passed over the boy.

The creature had no talons, poison fangs, beak or teeth, but its huge mouth was possessed of the awful power of literally inhaling the boy.

It drew Jack to it, and, bound and helpless by its squirm-

long arms he felt himself being slowly emptied into the frightful maw of the monster.

"Great Heaven!" he groaned. "I know it must be awful to be eaten alive, but it is terrible to be drunk alive."

Propped into the pulpy body of the calamary went the boy's body, and then he felt the creature begin to move rapidly away with him at an angle from the boat.

"Help! Help!" he gasped.

Jack's feelings were inexpressible upon finding himself half devoured and carried out of reach of his friends by this infernal creature.

"Help! Help!" he yelled again and again.

Just then he seized the edge of its gaping maw and saw that it was entangled in a long line, and reaching out his hand he grasped it.

A thrill of joy passed over him, for he saw that it was the glowing electric wire by which he had exploded the bombs.

The current was flowing into it yet, and although the outer metal shell of his suit became charged with the electricity flowing from the end of the wire which he then held, the rubber gloves and rubber lining to the suit insulated his body so he did not feel the current.

On the other hand, the calamary felt it, and as he twisted the wire around his arm and the creature received a shock, it began to disgorge him faster than it absorbed him.

In a moment the boy was out of its sac entirely, and as he held on to the live wire tenaciously and the calamary recoiled, it lost its power over him, and he hastened away.

Within a few moments there was a wide breach between the boy and the fish, and the creature vanished.

Jack lost no time getting back to the boat.

"By heavens, if I hadn't this diving suit on I would have perished," he muttered. "I have been actually swallowed alive!"

He shuddered over his narrow escape.

Closing the trap, he set the pump in motion and emptied the room of the water it contained.

He then passed into the storeroom, hastily divested himself of his suit, and losing control of his nerves he fell fainting to the floor.

The horrible experience he had undergone was too much for even plucky Jack Wright to stand with fortitude.

Tim and Fritz rushed up to him.

They saw that something extraordinary must have occurred to the boy to cause him to lose his senses.

Every effort was made to revive the boy, and he presently recovered and found that the boat was raised to the surface, and was going on.

He then explained the terrible details of what had befallen him to his wonder-struck companions.

"Talk about Jonah an' ther whale," said Tim, "his case wasn't nuthin' as bad as yourn. By ther jumpin' bullfrog, I wouldn't a-been in your boots fer a farm, I wouldn't."

"Did we lose much time by our misfortune?" questioned Jack.

"Fifteen minutes," replied the captain. "I am disappointed again, as I hoped we would lose more time than that."

"Sorry for your sake," said Jack, with a laugh.

"Wait till we reach Port Said," significantly said Knox. "The authorities will delay you there to collect toll to go through the Suez Canal. Then we shall see."

"Are there any more of your ship in these waters?"

"Yes," admitted the captain. "The Happy Sally."

"Then I don't intend to meet her and run chanced of any more men or similar occurrences," said Jack. "I'll finish my journey to the canal under water, where your captain won't see my boat."

A dark look of rage and mortification crept over Knox's face as Jack went his way below the surface once more.

"He is too much for me," he muttered savagely. "Now, Captain Dick Mahustay won't be able to do anything to aid me at all. I'll fix him at the Port, however, if there is any power in this," and he carefully felt of a tiny phial containing a strong drug, which he carried concealed in his pocket.

Knox was becoming desperate with each successive defeat, for up to the present time the Racer had run on the time she was scheduled for, and despite all obstacles had not lost a mile on her long journey.

The watch was divided, and Jack and the captain turned in.

CHAPTER X.

A WAIF OF THE WAVES.

At nine o'clock the next morning the boat was 450 miles from Tenez, at a point midway between Tunis and the island of Sicily.

It was a gloomy day, and every one felt depressed in spirits until Fritz brought out his accordion, and began to play a number of lively airs, whereupon their thoughts were turned into a new channel.

Numberless boats were gliding over the sea, and when Jack went into the pilot-house to assume command he found Knox there.

"Quite warm, balmy weather we are having here compared with the frigid cold of our own country when we left there," remarked the captain.

"Had we struck this sea in midsummer," replied Jack, "this heat would be unbearable. Tim, I'll take the wheel—you go to breakfast. We have got eighteen hours' more travel in this sea, and we ought to finish the 1,080 miles by three o'clock to-morrow morning to Port Said."

"Barring accidents," dryly said Knox, with a frown of annoyance.

"I don't expect any in broad daylight."

"Can't you give us a breath of fresh air on the surface, Wright?"

"I don't mind. But, remember, as soon as we descry any vessel trying to get near us, down we will dive."

"Surely I don't mind that—but, hello! Look above—what's that?"

"A human figure floating on the water's surface! A female, too."

"Stop the boat, for heaven's sake, and find out who it is!"

Just then the Racer emerged like a mermaid from the sea, and glancing around Jack saw a young girl swimming near by.

They were miles from land, and the nearest vessel was a steamer a mile away going to the eastward.

"How under heaven did she get into the water away off here?" the boy muttered, but just as Knox was going to reply the girl shrieked:

"Help! Save me! Save me!"

Although the boy hated to lose a moment the sight of the girl's peril, and the pleading tones of her despairing voice impelled him to reverse the lever, and steer the slowed boat toward her.

"Fritz!" he shouted. "Go up on deck and fling her a rope."

"Yah!" replied the Dutch boy, and out he went.

By the time Jack brought the Racer up to the girl Fritz had reached the deck, and they heard him bawl:

"Here! Looker! Crab dot rope vonet!"

He let the coils fly and they unwound, and the line struck the water near the swimming girl, who eagerly seized it.

"Pull away!" she cried.

Fritz did so, and Jack lowered the boat so she could easily get on deck.

She was, of course, drenched by her immersion, but she was saved, and Fritz led her down into the boat, weeping with excitement and gratitude.

Jack left the wheel in Tim's hands, and met her in the cabin. He saw at a glance that she was a beautiful girl of eighteen, attired in what had been handsome clothing before it had been wet, and she was evidently English or American.

"You was in great danger," he observed, to draw her out.

"I was upon the point of drowning," she answered, tremulously.

"Are you injured otherwise?"

"No, sir."

"Whom have I the honor of addressing?"

"My name is Kitty Bly, and I am from New York."

"Indeed! My name is Jack Wright, of Wrightstown."

"What! The famous boy inventor?"

"I am an inventor of submarine boats."

"And this is one of them?"

"It is. But how came you in the water?"

"Do you see yonder steamer?"

"Yes. Did you fall overboard from her?"

"No; I was flung or pushed from her deck."

"What! On purpose? By whom?"

"Gilbert Pugsley, my guardian, with whom I am making a tour of the world."

"What did he try to murder you for?"

"I am an orphan, and had a fortune of \$300,000 left to me by my father. As I have no relations, my father stipulated that all my money should go to Gilbert Pugsley, my guardian, if I should die before I attain my majority. To gain my money he tried to murder me."

"Quite a romance," said Jack, observing that Tim was making the boat fly again, to make up lost time.

"Had I not been an expert swimmer Pugsley would have been successful in his base design," said Kitty Bly. "I was amazed, for he always treated me kindly before, but now I know he is a scoundrel."

"Shall we put you aboard of the steamer again, so you can confront him and expose his rascality?" asked Jack.

"No, no!" replied the girl, in terrified tones. "I'm afraid of him!"

"There won't be any danger."

"I'd rather not risk it."

"Then what is to be done? Shall we set you ashore?"

"That will be better, yet I will be in great distress."

"How do you mean?"

"I am penniless and thousands of miles from home."

"Oh, I can furnish you with money."

"You are very kind and generous. I dislike imposing upon you."

"If you like, you can accompany us."

"Are you going to New York?"

"Yes, within eighteen days."

"Then I would much rather go with you."

"I warn you this is a dangerous cruise."

"But it can't be more dangerous than the plight I would be in if you put me ashore," replied Kitty Bly.

"Very well, then," laughed Jack. "You shall go around the world with us."

"Around the world?" queried the girl in amazement.

"That is the object of our trip," answered Jack.

And he thereupon gave the persecuted girl the details of their trip.

She was amazed.

A section of the sleeping room was given up to her, and she had to go to bed while her clothing was drying.

"Poor lass!" said Tim. "She are in great trouble."

"I'll stand by her," the boy replied resolutely; "and upon

our return to America I'll see that Gilbert Pugsley is punished for his infamous attempt upon her life, and she shall be thus freed from his persecutions."

"She is a deuced pretty girl," remarked the captain, "and I'm quite smitten with her. An heiress, eh? Well, well!"

"I hope it isn't her fortune that attracts you?" said Jack.

"Nonsense! But \$300,000 isn't to be sneezed at."

"Mercenary!" remarked Jack, contemptuously.

"Moreover, as you may win a fortune, I might retrieve myself."

"Hadn't you better stop calculating till you find out first whether she would have you or not?" queried Jack coolly.

"That's so. By Jove! I'm counting my chickens before they are hatched!" laughed the captain nervously. "Still, I won't lose the opportunity. Wish me good luck, Wright—I'm going to make a dead set for her hand and for—heart, I mean."

He uttered a disagreeable laugh as he said this.

"I'd sooner see that girl dead than the wife of this calculating and unscrupulous man!" thought the boy, darting an angry glance at the ship owner.

The day passed uneventfully by, and night fell upon the sea.

Kitty Bly proved to be a great acquisition.

She could cook nicely, and sew buttons on their clothes, keep the boat in order, make up the beds, and attended to a score of little duties which hitherto had used up most of Fritz's time.

The Dutch boy was thus enabled to attend to many more important duties, and the crew of the Racer enjoyed better comforts, for as good as a man might be attending to such routine work it was a woman's sphere, and could be better done by feminine hands.

The captain lost no time in carrying out his project, for he paid his attentions to the girl as soon as she appeared that day, and was most assiduous in trying to impress her favorably.

Unfortunately for his little plan, though, the girl did not take very kindly to him, as an instinctive aversion of him arose within her mind, and she repulsed him on every occasion.

Knox had a rich prize in view, and would not accept defeat.

He found the girl sitting alone in the cabin after Tim and Fritz had turned in, and he sat down beside her and said earnestly:

"Miss Bly, since I first met you this morning, I have been devoured by——"

"Rats!" chuckled Bismarck, who was perched on the sideboard listening.

The captain darted a wrathful glance at the bird, and continued:

"I have been devoured by a passion to be able to call you——"

"Chestnuts!" shrieked Bismarck, shrilly.

The girl could hardly repress a laugh, for she saw at once what the eager captain was desirous of saying, and felt thankful to the bird.

"To call you my sweetheart!" said Knox, scowling at Bismarck. "And I hope, Miss Bly, that you will give me a——"

"Cracker!" sang out the bird, cocking its head on one side.

"Confound you, shut up!" roared the captain, unable to suppress his rage as he shook his fist at the bird. "I was going to say, I hope you will give me encouragement to think that my suit for your hand is——"

"All rot! All rot!" grumbled Bismarck.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the girl merrily. "Oh, dear, what fun!"

The captain did not see it in that light, however, for he mut-

tered an impression, and picking up a stick, he made a rush for the lark.

Marmarch had his eye on him, however, and flew away into the pilot-house, where he was safe under Jack's protection.

Then the captain turned to resume his ill-starred love making, but the girl was gone, for she had fled as soon as his back was turned.

Knox raved, but it did him no good, and he finally made up his mind to make the attempt again when the bird was not around.

CHAPTER XI.

DOWN THE SUFZ CANAL.

"All hands on duty! All hands on duty!"

It was Jack's voice that pealed through the boat, awakening every one, and they went flocking into the pilot-house, where the boy was suddenly seen to shut off power and bring the boat to a pause.

"What is the matter?" queried Knox hastily.

"We are besieged by boats trying to prevent our entrance to the canal," cried Jack, pointing out of the window.

"What! Are we at Port Said already?"

"Of course; and prompt to the minute. Look at the chronometer."

"Just three o'clock, by Jove!"

"Lord save us, lad! We're surrounded by boats!" gasped Tim.

"This is the result of a direct design!" angrily cried the boy.

"How can that be possible?" haughtily answered Knox.

"You are, I'll swear, suspicious that I have had a hand in it, ain't you?"

"Isn't it peculiar that another of your boats should be here, eh?" excitedly demanded Jack. "Don't you see the bark Happy Sally over there, all her crew on deck, pointing and gesturing toward us? See here—what does it mean, anyway? You said she was at Alexandria, over seventy-two miles away to the west of this place. Then what is she doing here? This is the second of your ships to try and get us in trouble. Hang it, sir, it looks as if your infernal Captain Dick Mainstay put the authorities of Gibraltar up, by telegraph, to watching for us, and trying to stop us, do you see?"

"Tut—tut, my boy! Cool off! You're excited!" said the captain.

"Not without reason! By Jingo, see! The Happy Sally is leading all those boats this way—do you see it?"

"Dive under!" roared Tim.

"I can't work the pumps! They have been tampered with again!"

"Holy smoke! Den ve vhas vall into deir hands!" ejaculated Fritz.

"Never!" shouted Jack. "I'll baffle that design if I drown us all!"

He left the wheel in Tim's hands, and rushed back into the storeroom, followed by a dark, triumphant glance from Knox, who had found occasion to break the pump lever.

Port Said lay on the west side of the canal, on the low, narrow, treeless, desolate strip of land which separates the Mediterranean Sea from Lake Menzaleh, and the Racer lay in the outer harbor, formed by the terminal piers of the canal.

The inner harbor comprised three sheltered basins, the commercial dock, the Arsenal dock and the Sherif dock, the latter backed by buildings.

The quayside was within the two great breakwaters, and Jack saw that the town was a lively place, for despite the late-

ness of the hour the French cafes and dance halls were ablaze with lights, resonant with mirth and music, and the streets were thronged with people.

Jack had donned a diving suit, and rushed down through a trap door into the central water chamber, below the cabin.

It was dark and gloomy, and he turned the electric light on at the top of his helmet, left the staircase, and flashing the light around the big empty room, he saw a trap door in the bottom.

It was fastened with a massive latch, opened automatically.

He darted over and grasped it, just as the vessels on the surface ranged up to the Racer, and pulled it open.

In gushed a tremendous jet of water, with such force that he was knocked flying across the room, and the chamber began to fill.

The force of the water drove the air in to the spiracles leading into the end chambers, and soon the boat sank down, weighted by the water ballast beyond its buoyancy.

In a few moments Jack was submerged.

The room got half full, and he made an effort to shut the door.

It required all his muscle, but he finally fastened it again.

Then he mounted the stairs and got above the water level.

He pushed the trap open and emerged from the hold.

To get off his suit was but the work of a moment, and he then returned to the cabin, where he found Knox standing with a look of extreme chagrin upon his face.

"You seem to have overcome the difficulty," said he.

"Ain't you sorry?"

"Don't be exasperating, Wright?"

"We are under the sea, ain't we?"

"Yes; and we went down so sudden you nearly drowned us."

"How do you mean?"

"One of the port holes was open, and the water rushed in."

"It was shut up again, of course?"

"Kitty Bly discovered it and closed it."

"Good for Kitty."

Jack passed on into the pilot-house, where he found Tim and Fritz examining the broken pump lever.

He saw out the window that they were submerged, and the boat was resting on the bottom in about thirty feet of water.

"Keel haul the blasted lubber as broke this lever!" Tim was grumbling. "I'll bet my 'lowance o' grog for a year as it was done a-purpose, so's to put us inter ther hands o' ther authorities."

"Don't say a word about it," remonstrated Jack. "Of course Knox did it when no one was watching him, but we don't want to accuse him of what we have no proof he did. It will do to try that when we have dead sure evidence by which we can convict him."

"Do you vant dot I fix me dot?" queried Fritz.

"Certainly. There are duplicate levers in the storeroom."

The Dutch boy got one and repaired the damage, after which the boat was partially emptied of the water and started ahead.

"We can pass along into the canal now," said Jack, in satisfied tones, "but not very fast under water, my friends, as we might run afoul of the slides. Let's get well past Port Said and I will then bring her to the surface."

The searchlight was started, and as its glaring beams darted ahead of the boat Tim took up a position in the window on lookout.

Kitty came in, and was amazed at the strange sight of going along under water, while Knox remained in the cabin, bitterly cursing the adverse fates that baffled every advantage he schemed to gain.

The boy kept his boat going for half an hour at reduced speed, and finally brought her to the surface of the canal.

They were at an unfrequented spot, and he kept her half submerged at the surface, and put on a speed of sixty knots again.

The average time of transit through the canal for steamships by day is twenty-four hours; by night with electric lights it is nineteen hours.

Vessels they passed had electric projectors at their bows close to the water as possible, and their crews paid the closest attention to the orders from the passing gares, or stations, along the route.

The signal of three white lights shown vertically indicated "slow down," while two white lights is the order to stop and haul into the gare to allow vessels from the opposite direction to pass.

The steamer would then haul in, make fast, put out lights and lie snug at her berth alongside of the desert while the incomer passed by.

The Racer passed safely through the canal, and reached Suez, on the Gulf of Suez, an arm of the Red Sea.

It was an interesting collection of shipping houses and squalid natives' huts, among which were several tumble-down mosques.

Along the docks swarmed donkeys and donkey boys.

The boat passed on to the gulf and thence into the Red Sea, the water of which was blue, the background light brown, the hazy atmosphere pink, and the temperature as hot as a furnace.

Jack pointed off to the left in the dim distance.

"There is Mount Sinai!" he remarked.

Other biblical places of interest were passed, and when daylight came the Racer was rushing along like a meteor to cover the 1,400 miles—the length of the sea from Suez to the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb.

The navigation of the Red Sea was a dangerous undertaking, for the prevalence of violent winds and the number of islands, shoals, and coral reefs made the shore line difficult of passage.

In midchannel, however, there was a hundred mile passage clear, for the basin of the sea was the lowest portion of a deep valley lying between the highlands of Africa on the west, and the lofty plateau of the Arabian hills upon the east, which left a sandy, sterile tract along the sea.

The waters of the sea were, however, in places, colored red by the coral, by red and purple coloring of the rocks that in some parts bordered it, and by animalcules and sea-weed within its bosom.

At exactly twenty minutes to eight o'clock on the following night the Racer completed the 1,400 mile journey, and dashed into the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb on her way to the Gulf of Aden.

She had not lost one minute by accidents.

Tim and Fritz turned in, and Jack stood alone in the pilot-house, the girl having retired some time before, and Knox lay on a sofa in the cabin.

Presently the clock struck eight.

The captain was deeply pondering, and finally came to a resolution.

He withdrew the drug from his pocket with which he had provided himself, and stole softly over to the door of the pilot-house.

Peering through, he saw the young inventor intently watching the compass.

He then glanced warily around, listened intently, and hearing no sound, he withdrew the phial from his pocket, unscrewed the cork, and reaching into the pilot-house, he stood the phial on the floor.

A volatile odor emanated from it, and he softly closed the door.

Jack did not notice it, the deadly fumes stole so gradually

upon him, and the air in the room became heavily laden with the strange, aromatic flavor.

The boy breathed it, and his senses began to get dazed.

His respiration became heavy and labored, and then, overcome by the fumes of the drug, he suddenly lost his senses and fell to the floor, where he lay in a deep slumber.

CHAPTER XII.

DIAMOND CUT DIAMOND.

A chuckle of intense satisfaction pealed from the captain's lips when he heard Jack fall, and he recovered the phial, opened one of the front windows, and carried the drug into the stateroom.

The heavy breathing of the sleepers told him how soundly they slept, and he placed the phial close to their berths and crept out again.

Careful to close the door in order to keep the deadly fumes within the room, he made his way back to the pilot-house.

A cool draught was running in the window, and clearing the atmosphere of the deadly fumes of the drug, so that he had no fear of sharing the fate of his victims.

Jack lay upon his back on the floor fast asleep, for the drug had taken a strong hold upon him, and a sardonic laugh pealed from Knox's lips as he viewed his underhanded work.

"That settles it!" he muttered. "The boat is in my hands twenty-four hours. If I can but gain a day on them I am saved!"

He grasped the wheel and steered the boat for the Arabian shore.

The Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb had been passed, and as the four points of the Southern Cross arose bright and sparkling ahead, he brought the boat to a pause near Aden.

The town stood upon a rocky, bare peninsula.

It was the Gibraltar of the Red Sea.

It was infested with big, black Somalis, thin, avaricious Jews, and ungainly camels moved up and down its ancient streets.

Upon one of the steamers not far off he saw some people throwing coppers into the water for the little shavey-headed negro boys to dive after by the light of the silvery moon.

Close to the shore the boat lay idly tossing upon the water, unseen by any one, and the schemer inside of her delighted with his work.

He heard no sound, and fastened the wheel to go back and see how his other victims fared, when a dizzy feeling began to assail him.

A thrill of fear passed over him, and he staggered.

"Great Heaven! What ails me?" he gasped, clutching at his forehead. "Am I getting faint and sick in this awful heat?"

He sank to the floor, and to his amazement he saw the phial of drug standing overturned upon the floor near the door.

At the same moment through the open door he saw Whiskers, the little red monkey, go scampering away.

Then the truth stole over his hazy mind.

Whiskers had seen him put the phial in the stateroom, and like all his tribe he was very imitative, and had mimicked him by taking the phial back to the pilot-house, and doing just as he had done.

By this means he had inhaled the fumes, and was caught in his own trap by the astute little monkey.

He scarcely had time to figure the matter out, when he felt his senses deserting him, and he yelled in despairing tones:

"Help! Help!"

The boat almost instantly lapsed into unconsciousness.

He lay there for several moments beside Jack.

Evidently the monster had removed the phial from the state-room before it had time to get in its deadly work, for his cry aroused Tim and Fritz, who hastily arose, donned their pants, and came hurrying into the pilot-house to see what was the matter.

Their amazement was unbounded to see the state of affairs.

They hastily examined the two sleepers, and found that they were alive, after which they discovered the phial, and flung it out of the window, ere it could do any more mischief.

"Oh, Lor!" groaned Tim. "Wot in thunder does this all mean, Fritz?"

"How vhas I know me dot?" growled the young Dutchman.

"Wot ails 'em, anyway?"

"Dey vhas stupid mit some drug, both of 'em."

"Aye, aye, an' ther boat has stopped."

"Den vhy yer don't shtard her ub vonct? Can'd I dake care of 'em?"

"You are right, my lad, fer it's werry valuable time as we are a-losin' here. Do yer best ter bring 'em around; do yer best, lad."

Tim started the boat again, and Fritz hastily dragged the two sleepers out of the room into the cabin and resorted to every means he knew of to revive them.

It was a difficult task, for the drug was potent, and had gained the mastery of them, but Kitty soon joined him, and as she was versed in recipes and antidotes, they managed to bring Jack back to his senses after a long time.

The situation was explained to him, and a dark frown gathered upon his brow, and he exclaimed:

"Don't do anything to restore Knox. I see his hand in this dirty work. How else could it have happened?"

"If you vhas set der vord," growled Fritz angrily, "I shuck him overboard so gwick you dink he was a gannon pall."

"No; let him be."

They went into the pilot-house, and Jack examined the gauges.

The boat was running all right, and was then in the Gulf of Aden, and heading as straight as an arrow for Cape Guardafui, between which point and Socotra Island she was bound to pass.

"How is she going, Tim?" he asked breathlessly.

"At seventy knots for an hour to make up lost ground."

"Good! Nothing wrong with the machinery, I hope?"

"Nuthin'."

"Then we are all right yet, thank Heaven!"

No one retired that night, for the excitement had been too much for them, and the treacherous captain slept soundly under the influence of his own drug, while the boat passed into the Arabian Sea.

In twenty-four hours she was 1,440 miles from Aden, in the Indian Ocean, with a clear, moonlit night and a rolling sea before her, approaching the Maldive Islands on her way toward Jendira Head at the southern point of the island of Ceylon.

Knox came to his senses.

He was almost mad with chagrin over the ill-success of what he thought a sure means of thwarting Jack, but he had to cover up his feelings for policy's sake, under a mask of brevity.

"I should have been more careful not to have carried that infernal drug with me," said he to Jack, when they were alone in the cabin. "It was a deadly compound. I used it to gain sleep at night, as I am a dyspeptic and my physician prescribed it. How it came to fall from my pocket to the floor I do not pretend to know. Suffice it that I was much and sorely afflicted from it than any one else, and for that rea-

son I trust that you will not imagine it was done on purpose."

"I could not very well accuse you of unfair dealings on the very grounds you assume," the boy replied, "but how did it happen that the boat was laid up near Aden, with the power shut off?"

"Why, I did it, of course," replied Knox. "Upon finding myself being overpowered by the drug, I ran to the wheel, as you had dropped senseless, and seeing that the Racer was plunging ashore head foremost, I stopped her just in time to prevent her running aground and shouted for help before my senses deserted me."

"Yes, it was your cries that alarmed Tim and Fritz, and brought them to our assistance," said Jack. "But for them we might have been lost."

The ship owner was satisfied that his version of the affair had disarmed Jack of any suspicion he might have had about the matter, and he very complacently began to plan some new means of retarding the boat.

On the following day Jack sent the Racer beneath the surface as the sun was boiling hot, and started the searchlight.

Along shot the boat like some strange monster of the deep, and there presently loomed up a solid wall of coral ahead of her course.

Jack swerved her off to the right, and seeing clear water ahead he let her go on, when she passed the coral reef.

But she did not go far, when suddenly another coral wall appeared ahead of her, and he swerved her again.

The wall ran in a circle all around the boat, however, and then the truth suddenly dawned upon Jack that they were within an atoll of which the Maldives are principally composed.

They are circular reefs of coral, hollow inside like a ring, the hollow being filled with water, and the boat had doubtless gone through a breach in the wall, and thus got inside of the basin.

He brought the Racer to the surface, and with one glance verified this conclusion, for it was one of a large group of similar islands festooning the sea for many miles around.

The top of the circular island was covered with palms and other tropical vegetation, among which the boy saw numbers of natives, who had observed the boat.

The dark fellows had canoes, and as the boat lay upon the surface like a log, they entered them and paddled out toward the Racer.

CHAPTER XIII.

A FIGHT.

Jack did not know whether the approaching natives were friendly or hostile, but to prepare for accidents he shouted:

"Arm yourselves, boys; we may have trouble with these fellows."

"Why don't you sink the boat again?" suggested the captain, in uneasy tones. "By searching around you may be able to find the opening by which we got into the atoll."

"I shall in a few moments," replied the boy, "but first let us see what the Maldives are up to. Their primitive weapons can't injure us. You know how thick the plates of the boat are."

The sun was broiling down hotly.

Kitty just then came in.

"Just see what pretty shell baskets those natives are bringing out," she exclaimed, glancing longingly at them. "I wish I had one."

The men in the canoes had seen our friends through the

open window of the Racer, and recognized them as whites, but the strange aspect of the boat aroused their suspicions.

They were of a darkish copper color, short of stature, and poor physique, but their faces wore a pleasing expression, and they had large, bright eyes, resembling those of the Singhalese and Malabar people.

Expert shell workers, they had evidently come out to sell some of their products, and although of a suspicious nature, they were generally accounted a peaceful race of the Islam faith.

It was the island of Male at which the Racer was, about one mile long, six feet above water, and three-quarters of a mile wide; the population was 2,000, and had once been encompassed by walls.

The sultan's residence was upon it, near an old fort of Portuguese construction, containing a few old guns, and the houses were large, with peaked roofs thatched with cocoa leaves.

The people were fishermen, gathered cocoanuts and cowries, wove fabrics and drew toddy for their living.

"I have heard that they use larins, or 'fish-hook money,' made of bent rods of silver," said Jack, "and that Indian rupees are current here. But our own money will pass, and if you feel so inclined, you can go up on deck with these silver quarters and purchase some of those shell baskets, Miss Bly."

He handed her several quarters, and she smilingly departed, got on top of the boat and beckoned the Maldives to draw nearer.

Upon seeing she was a girl, the Fandiari, or chief of law and religion, in the foremost boat, ordered his men to paddle over to her.

Several of the baskets were exchanged for the money, the girl speaking English and the Maldives a language of their own, neither understanding each other.

Another boat now drew near, containing the atolu-veri, or king's agent, who collects the revenue, and, struck by the girl's beauty, he suddenly became convinced that she would add to the charm of the sultan's harem.

He held a consultation with the Rarhu-veri, or headsman, and between them they concluded to order the Katibu, judge and minister, to arrest her.

That functionary, as a mild pretext for so doing, held out some of the coins the girl paid, and implying that they were counterfeit, he shouted:

"Bad! Bad!" the only English words he knew.

"They ain't!" exclaimed Kitty.

"Bad! Bad! Bad!" reiterated the man.

Then he seized her unexpectedly and dragged her into his boat.

Kitty shrieked, and the Maldives rowed hastily away with her.

The moment Jack saw what was done he became excited.

"Look there—treachery!" he exclaimed, pointing out the window.

"Save me!" shrieked Kitty, in frantic tones.

"Up on deck with you!" cried Jack. "I'll pursue them!"

Grasping their rifles, Tim and Fritz went hurrying aloft.

"Dear me," said the captain, "they may kill the girl, and thus prevent me from winning her hand. This is an outrage."

"Don't rant!" said Jack dryly, as he started the Racer after the fleeing boats. "Go up and help my friends to save her."

"I really believe I shall expose myself to danger for her sake," said the captain, and he left the pilot-house, muttering: "If I can make a hero of myself in her eyes, perhaps she may think more favorably of my proposal to her. 'Pon my word, I'll try to save her!"

Jack aimed the Racer for the scattering canoes, and drove her bow upon them with such a crash that several of them were

smashed, others were capsized, and not a few of their inmates were injured.

On dashed the Racer, and reaching the boat in which two of the Maldives held Kitty a captive, the boy shouted as he stopped the boat:

"Fire upon them, boys!"

Bang!

Bang!

Bang!

Three reports rang out.

Every shot hit an inmate of the boat.

There were a dozen, and they all had paddles which they plied vigorously.

Whiz!

Whiz!

Whiz!

A shower of arrows and spears were delivered at the pursuers.

All the natives in the other boats now took it upon themselves to fire.

"Look out!" roared Tim.

"Och! Dey vhas missed us!" cried Fritz.

"Look out for Kitty!" the young inventor cried, warningly.

Bang!

Bang!

Bang!

Three more shots were fired.

"Six more gone!" cried the captain delightedly.

The rest of the paddlers worked their blades faster.

"Hove to!" shouted Jack.

They did not understand him, and kept right on.

"Jack!" shouted the girl just then.

"Aye, what now?" was the boy's reply.

"Run them down with the Racer! If you don't they may get me ashore. I can swim. Don't be afraid. It's the only way for me to escape them!"

"I believe she is right!" muttered the boy. "If once they get her ashore, there is no telling how much time may be lost at trying to rescue her. Besides, we may never recover her alive."

"Come on! Don't hesitate!" cried Kitty.

"Look out, then! We are near the shore!" he replied.

There were a large number of people on the island, all of whom were shouting, and just then Jack's friends on top of the boat had to fire at the natives in the other boats to drive them away.

The boy let the Racer drive swiftly at the canoe, and it struck it amidships and capsized it.

Over it went, spilling the crew and girl into the lagoon, and the boat then made a curve, and left the Maldives swimming on the water with the girl in their midst.

"Horray!" shouted Tim.

"Help Kitty on board again!" cried Jack.

"I shall save you! I shall save you!" cried Knox eagerly, as he reached down to get the girl up out of the water.

There was a mischievous look in her eyes as she caught hold of his hand, and she gave it such a violent jerk that he was pulled down into the water with a loud splash.

"Oh!" he yelled. "I'll get drenched!"

He struck out, forgetting all about the girl in his alarm, and Kitty uttered a rippling laugh, and seized a rope Tim flung her.

She easily got up on deck.

Fritz was kept busy repelling boarders, for several of the Maldives tried to get up on deck, and the stock of his gun was brought down with resounding whacks upon their knuckles.

"Back mit yer!" he bellowed. "Ve don'd vant yer vonet. Get oudt if dot if yer don'd vant me ter proke yer het alretty!"

"Hurry—hurry!" went his gun, to emphasize his remarks, and he finally succeeded in driving them all away.

"Help me out of the water!" yelled Knox, as the dye became washed out of his jet black mustache and eyebrows, leaving them as white as his hair. "Confound it, I can't get up the slippery sides."

"Straddle the bow end!" called Jack.

Just then a tremendous shower of arrows and spears came flying through the air from the people ashore.

Down into the boat dashed Fritz after Tim and the girl, and the captain dove just in time to save his head from getting hit.

Two barbed shafts played a tattoo harmlessly against the hull of the boat, and then the captain came to the surface again.

He managed to get upon the cylinder the way Jack suggested, and the natives ashore made a target of him.

Several of their whistling weapons grazed him stingingly, and he might have been pierced fatally had not Jack and his friends fired out of the port holes and pilot-house window, scattering their enemies.

"Harry up!" shouted Jack. "Get into the boat before they return."

"Give me time, can't you?" grumbled Knox.

But he lost no time in obeying this wholesome advice, and as soon as he was in the boat, he closed the trap.

Jack shut the windows, and his friends closed the ports.

The boy then set the pumps in motion, and sunk the boat ten fathoms, and started her ahead.

"Now to find our way out of here," he remarked, as he steered the Racer around close to the wall. "If we can't find that opening again pretty soon, and get along about our business, we may lose a good deal of precious time."

The captain and Kitty divested themselves of their wet garments in their staterooms, but as the girl had no other clothes, she had to go to bed again till her garments dried, amid the laughter of our friends.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE RACER SUNK.

The Racer glided around the circular walls, until finally they came to the opening through which she had passed, and then ran out in open water again.

Jack brought her to the surface again, for they were amid such a dense group of the coral islands that it would have been the height of folly to hazard along running under water.

Moreover, there were so many sunken reefs around her that it was necessary to keep a sharp lookout to avoid striking them.

He posted Tim on the lookout, for although the old sailor had only one eye, he had remarkably keen sight with it.

They then proceeded among the islands, watched by the natives from shore, and in due course of time left the Maldives far astern.

The boat covered nearly five hundred miles that day, despite all the obstacles she encountered, and the boy was jubilant.

"O looks so it we would beat the schedule, Mr. Knox," he smiled.

"You don't intend to take advantage of the day you gain on Greenwich time, I hope, by going around the world from east to west, which is observable in this vicinity?" queried the captain suspiciously.

"No, no!" laughed Jack. "We are not unprincipled, Mr. Knox. I am a fair and square fellow. Of course it would not be fair to take advantage of the difference

in time you mention, but I mean to go by the clock and calendar of Wrightstown, and only occupy just twenty bona fide days to encircle the globe, just as I bet you I would."

The captain heaved a sigh of relief.

He expected Jack to take advantage of him.

But there was nothing contemptible about Jack Wright.

The boat was then off the coast of Ceylon, and so near the shore that they could see the lights of Galleon, the Indian Ocean side, ere the Racer merged into the Bay of Bengal.

Fritz and Tim then relieved the boy.

"Your course," said Jack, "is toward the Nicobar Islands, at the south of the great Nicobar, and the city of Acheen on the northern coast of Sumatra, in order to make the shortest cut through the Strait of Malacca."

"Aye, aye, sir. I seen as yer wuz a-goin' by Singapore an' atween ther Anamba an' Natuna Islan's in ther Gulf o' Siam," replied Tim, saluting.

"In other words, your course is for 6 degrees and 40 minutes north latitude, and 93 east longitude. If you can get any edible birds' nests from the savage Malayan pirates who infest the islands while passing, without getting your fingers burnt, Fritz may serve us a fine swallow-work breakfast."

"Vot he means by dot?" queried Fritz, as Jack retired laughing.

"Gee whiz, what a lunkhead! Don't yer know as them 'ere islan's is whar ther natives ain't got nuthin' ter eat but birds' nests?"

"Vhy not?" queried Fritz in surprise.

"'Cause they ain't, that's why. How could they git anything ter eat on ther ground whar nuthin' but dirt an' stones grows?"

"Ain't dot funny?" said Fritz. "Don'd dey get someding else ter eat?"

"No, not unless they gits their flippers on a nice, fat, juicy, little Dutch lubber like you; then they have vot they call hog soup."

"Vot kind of soup dem call it ven dey vhas got a bik fool like you?"

The blow Tim aimed at Fritz with his wooden leg missed its mark, and striking the binnacle, the old sailor turned a somersault.

He saw a snappy constellation of stars when he landed at a sit, and Fritz chuckled and tickled himself in the ribs to laugh more when his first laugh was done.

The night began to wane, and before morning they were both so sleepy that they did not hear Knox come stealing from the stateroom.

He went up on deck, and walking quietly forward, he picked up a long coil of wire attached to a grapnel, which he had left there before he had turned in for the night.

Walking aft with it, he made the disengaged end of the wire fast to a ring-bolt in the deck, and dropped the grapnel astern.

It sunk out of sight.

A satisfied look crept over the sinister face of the scheming captain, and he muttered softly:

"In shoal water it will act as a drag, and hold the boat back as it passes along the bottom, while if caught in among some rocks it may stop her entirely."

Deep water was bound to affect it, too, for the flukes were bound to catch the drift weed, grasses, and other floating debris, collect a large quantity, and act as a fearful drag.

Moreover, it was placed where there was not much likelihood of it being detected, for the waves that boiled up astern, on account of the high rate of speed the boat ran at, submerged the wire.

Knox was about to approach the trap and go below, when he was startled to see Jack come up the companionway.

A thrill of guilty fear shot through him, and he recoiled, his

face turning ghastly, while a tigerish look leaped to his dark eyes.

"Did he see me?" he gasped in alarm.

Jack got upon the deck and glanced around.

"Ah! There you are, eh?" he exclaimed. "I saw your plan."

The captain's heart sank like lead, and he gulped down a big lump that seemed to rise in his throat, and muttered despairingly:

"Discovered!"

"Well," said Jack, "you look pale."

"I am sick," answered the guilty wretch.

"Yes, I see!"

"What are you going to do about it?" defiantly asked the captain.

"Do? I don't see that I can do anything?"

"That is sensible."

"Of course."

The captain sized Jack up critically.

He expected the boy would rave at him for his dirty work, upbraid him, and resort to some violent measure.

But he did nothing of the kind.

His cool, calm demeanor puzzled the rascal, and he wondered what the boy intended to do, when suddenly Jack said:

"I would have stayed in bed if I were you."

"Well, I didn't choose to," sullenly answered Knox.

"I see. But your plan can't make you feel better."

"My plan?"

"Yes—of coming up here for the air."

"Oh!" ejaculated Knox, with a relieved look.

He realized in a flash that the boy was not aware of what he had done, but followed him, thinking he was ill.

"Do you intend to stay up here?" queried the boy.

"A while. What did you follow me for, anyway?"

"Just to see if I could be of any use to you. You look ghastly."

"Well, I am obliged to you for your interest. It's only an attack of billiousness."

"Come below, and I'll dose you up with brandy."

"Thanks," responded the captain, and he followed the boy down, glad to get Jack away from the deck, for fear his keen eyes might detect the mean trick he had just played.

He felt a thrill of remorse and shame, too, for the young inventor's kindly interest in his welfare struck him reproachfully.

It seemed to make him feel very small and degraded compared to this generous, whole-souled boy whom he was trying to cheat under the guise of a pretended friendliness.

Jack, unsuspecting of what the captain had done, brought him below, and compelling him to take a drink of liquor, he asked him to go to bed and try to get well again.

Having thus disposed of the captain, Jack relieved Tim and Fritz and took charge of the wheel.

A few hours later Kitty arose, put on her dry clothes, and prepared breakfast, after which she was given a roll of canvas by Jack, a pair of scissors, thread and needle, and having the skill she began to cut and make a dress of duck for herself.

The suit she made proved to be very neat and useful as a change for her subsequently, and she thus got over the embarrassing position she had found herself in from a scarcity of garments.

At four o'clock that afternoon the Racer reached Ocheen, on the surface, and had just turned around the coast for Diamond Point, when out of Acheen Harbor there came a fleet of Malayan feluccas.

These boats were fairly swarming with Malay pirates, Jack saw at a glance, but he had not the least fear of them, as he did not suspect the fearful danger he was in.

"It is strange; we have on a pressure of sixty miles, and the boat only makes fifty!" the boy exclaimed.

The captain winced at this, for he was up, and reported himself well, for he knew that the drag he put on the boat was doing the business.

"If the boat has been losing ten miles an hour very long," continued Jack, "we may be over two hundred miles behind our schedule, but I think I detected the loss ere we dropped many miles, and I have added power, and the log registers right now."

The captain gnashed his teeth.

His drag was foiled in its purpose, although the boy did not know it.

"Are you going through that flotilla of pirates?" he asked.

"Certainly. Just see them watching us!"

The boat kept right on, but no sooner was she among the big feluccas, when the Malays came to the conclusion that the Racer was an ironclad war vessel come to exterminate them.

They were all armed with heavy ordnance, and opened fire upon the Racer upon all sides, much to Jack's surprise.

A dozen shots struck her, and knocked her spinning.

Then a shell exploded under her.

There came a fearful crash, and a hole was torn in one of her under plates.

In gushed the water, and she settled down and sank below the surface, carrying Jack and his friends with her.

CHAPTER XV.

THE SEA CAT.

A scene of intense excitement ensued on board of the Racer as soon as the Malay pirates opened fire upon our friends and the burst shell sunk her.

Kitty shrieked out, and fell fainting into Tim's arms, Knox gave a yell of terror, fell upon his knees, and began to pray like a sinner, while Fritz dove under a table head first.

Jack alone retained his coolness.

As soon as he felt the boat sinking he turned a lever that let in the sea and helped to sink her.

The damage, he knew, was under the hull.

All the windows were closed, and they had plenty of air on board, but although no damage was apparent, he knew it must be serious.

"Under water no harm can befall us at the pirate's hands," he thought.

Down, down, down sank the Racer like a shot, until she had descended twenty fathoms, when she reached the bottom, and came to a pause upon a mass of rocks.

The boy started all the electric lights, stopped the machinery, and then rushed off through all the rooms to examine the boat.

Not a sign of injury was visible among any of them.

"The damage must all be below," he commented.

There were ports over each one of the side screws, and a glance through each one revealed the fact that none of the wheels were injured by the bombardment.

"So far, so good," he grimly remarked.

"Fritz!" he shouted.

"Yah! Vhas ve goin' ter get killed?" groaned the Dutch boy.

"No. Don't be a fool. We are all right."

"Shiminey Christmas! Vhas dot so?"

"Let us examine the water chambers."

Fritz emerged from beneath the table, and Edward Knox got up.

"Do you mean to say we are safe?" he demanded, trembling.

"Of course we are."

"Good Lord, sir," said Tim. "Wot am I to do wif this leetle craft?"

"Bathe her head with water. Fritz, come with me below."

"Without diving suits?"

"No, you donkey! Come, brace up!"

The Dutch boy followed him into the storeroom, where they put on their suits, and going down into the central water chamber, they saw by their electric lights that a hole had been blown in the port garboard.

"The shell struck us in a weak spot," he remarked, after critically examining it. "We can easily repair the damage, however, as I have got several extra plates, and can insert a new one in place of the broken one."

"How much dime dot vhas taken?"

"Not more than an hour! What bad luck we are having? I had no sooner recovered the ground we had lost when a new delay had to spring up."

"Yer vhas got ter fix dot by der outside, alretty."

"And we must get the captain to help us."

They assented, and Jack called Knox, and asked him:

"Will you put on a diving suit, and aid us to repair the damage?"

"Not if it will hurry us any," candidly confessed Knox.

"Well, sir," said Jack, bluffing him, "you needn't, then; but let me explain what you will gain by trying to detain us now. There is just enough air in this boat to last us one hour longer. After that we will all strangle to death if we remain down here."

"Well?"

"But we won't. I have suits enough for all but you. We will put them on and ascend to the surface."

"And I?"

"Will remain here to strangle to death."

"Oh, Lord! Won't the boat rise?"

"Not till she is repaired."

"I'll help you—I'll help you."

"I thought you would," said Jack, with a smile.

"If I don't join him," thought Knox, "he will go out anyway and discover the drag. On the other hand, if I do go out I can get rid of it before he discovers it. Yes, I'll go."

Aided by Fritz, he put on a diving suit, while Jack went to prepare a plate and get such tools as he needed.

Everything was ready presently, and the three entered the water room and ascended to the deck, from which they sprang to the ground below.

The captain was startled by the queer sensation of being encased in a diving outfit, and expressed himself freely, but Jack had no time to banter words with him.

They listed the Racer over to one side very easily on account of the buoyancy of the water, and shored her up with stones so they could reach the torn garboard without any trouble.

It was on the starboard side, forward.

Jack set industriously to work getting the old plate out in order to insert the new one, and, leaving Fritz to aid him, the captain went aft and cut the drag from the boat.

He had no sooner done so when he detected a sudden, rushing movement in the water, and a shoal of herrings suddenly shot past him in a swarm of thousands.

It took only a moment for them to vanish, but before the captain recovered from his amazement, he saw that they were pursued by a tremendous sea cat.

It was a fish of curious shape and appearance, having a long, shark-like body, a dorsal protuberance with serrated edges behind the dorsal fin, a long, conical snout, and two

large wing-like fins, giving it a peculiarly repulsive appearance.

The creature had mangled thousands of herrings in its ferocious pastime, and upon seeing Knox, darted at him like a flash.

He uttered a cry and recoiled.

"Help!" he yelled hoarsely.

The next moment the sea cat struck him a violent blow with its ugly head, and knocked him down on the rocks.

He shouted again and again.

Jack and Fritz heard him.

"What's the matter?" cried the boy, looking around.

"Save me from this monster!" shrieked the captain.

"He vhas gotten addacked by hisselluf," said Fritz.

The sea cat turned itself around, and again fastening the baleful glare of its tigerish green eyes upon the captain, it dove at him just as he was getting upon his feet and knocked him spinning again.

By this time Jack had a chance to see his assailant's nature, and pulling a pistol from his belt, he aimed and fired at it.

The ball struck the sea cat and exploded in its body.

And the next moment he was blown to fragments!

"Come over here!" admonished Jack.

The captain hastened to obey.

"Let me get in the boat again," he groaned. "I've got all I want of this sort of thing. I ain't used to it like you fellows, you know."

"The danger is past now," gruffly replied Jack, who had by that time dislodged the shattered remains of the plate. "Help Fritz to lift that new plate up in its place while I drive rivets through."

"Are you quite positive there is no peril——"

"Of course! Come! Come! Every moment is precious to us. Lose no time. I am in a hurry to finish this job."

The cowardly man subdued his agitation as much as possible, and while helping Fritz he kept a nervous watch over his shoulder to guard against another unexpected attack.

Jack worked like a beaver.

His hammer resounded against the hull as he drove in the rivets, and he soon had the new plate in place.

Then they re-entered the boat.

He clenched the rivets on the inside, and then made a very careful examination of the rest of the hull to see if there were any more defects that required repairs, but found none.

Satisfied that the boat was all right, he divested himself of his armor, and raised the Racer to the surface.

The feluccas were gone.

"I'd like to have flung a few bombs at those fellows out of revenge!" he exclaimed. "But they must have skipped right away as soon as they fired upon us. See, boys, we are only two hours behind time."

He turned the lever to 70, but what was his amazement to soon find that the boat was not losing an inch.

He did not know that the captain had removed the drag.

The Racer darted ahead down the Strait of Malacca then as if nothing had occurred to interfere with her, and the boy drove her so hard that it was not long before he regained the distance they had lost by the unlucky delay.

Kitty had recovered from her fainting fit, much to Tim's delight, for he was out of his element with females in distress, and she set about to prepare their food for them.

The captain felt despondent over being obliged to dispose so summarily of the drag, but there had been no help for it.

"Better luck next time," he thought darkly. "I'll devise a newer and surer plan. They did not find out what I did, so it seems as if fortune is favoring me at last."

Jack's suspicions were aroused, however, upon finding the boat working all right again, and he whispered to his friends:

"I've got an idea that our tardiness was owing to some of Knox's machinations, boys. There is something singular in the way the boat acted. Mark me, we don't watch that man close enough, and you must be more observant in future, for I am sure he knows more about the Racer's peculiar actions than he will say."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CAPTAIN BAFLED AGAIN.

The Racer passed down the Straits of Malacca through the Strait of Singapore and off to the Anamba and the Natuna Islands.

Jack headed her for the Sooloo Sea, between Palawan and Borneo.

Their course was then set south of the Philippines, so that they would run on the 20th parallel between the Ladrone and Caroline Islands, the straight course which, across the Pacific, would bring them to Central America on their way to the Gulf of Mexico.

In figuring the time Jack had, of course, mapped the straightest sea course, and taking that as a basis of calculation, he felt sure of being able to make the big run on time.

On the afternoon when the boat ran through the China Sea he sat computing the distances and calculating that he would have to add to the given distance of 25,000 miles of the circumference of the earth, the difference lost in going down the Red Sea, and the distance to be made of going up from the Gulf of Mexico.

It was about 3,000 miles loss.

"That will make our actual run about 28,000 miles," he said to Kitty, who sat beside him in the cabin while he was calculating.

"Now, we have been averaging about 60 miles an hour all along. For every mile lost we have made up the difference by increasing the speed by adding power."

"Do you think you will win?" the girl asked anxiously.

"We ought to," he replied. "At the rate of 1,440 miles a day, if no accident occurs, we ought to make 28,000 miles in a trifle less than 19 and a half days, allowing twelve hours as leeway for accidents, so I don't see any reason for failure."

"How far have you traveled up to the present time?" asked Kitty.

Jack glanced at his watch.

It was three o'clock.

Then he began to figure again.

The girl watched him intently until he was through; then he said:

"We are now between Mindanas and the Pelew islands. From Wrightstown to London, England, is about 3,225 miles, and from London to Manilla is a distance of 10,650 miles by the course we came. We are now twenty-five miles east of Manilla, and that makes the distance we have thus far traveled about 13,900 miles—a little over half the distance."

"And the time—how much have you used up so far?"

"Nine days, fifteen hours and forty minutes."

"You have got it figured down pretty fine, haven't you?"

"The indicators in the pilot-house register everything to the minute."

"The boat is wonderful, Mr. Wright."

"Go into the pilot-house and see if my figures ain't correct."

The girl had her curiosity aroused and did so.

When she reappeared there was a look of astonishment on her face.

"You have figured it within three miles," she remarked.

"Well, since I have told you three minutes have passed

by," laughed Jack, "and, as the Racer is making a mile a minute, you can see that I was correct at the moment I spoke."

This was certainly true.

"It shows the value of seconds!" remarked the girl.

Jack then went out, and Captain Knox approached the girl. He had been sitting across the room intently listening to the conversation, and now had a dark, gloomy look upon his face.

But he assumed a sweet smile when he faced the girl, and said:

"Our young commander is a wonderful little chap, isn't he?"

"Extraordinary," replied Kitty, admiringly.

"I hope," said Knox, with a jealous twinge, "that you only admire his genius as the inventor of this marvelous boat?"

The girl's face flushed crimson, and her blue eyes snapped fire.

"Sir!" she exclaimed, haughtily.

"Pardon my presumption," said the captain hastily. "I meant no reflection. You know how much I love——"

"Mr. Knox! Come here vonet!" said Fritz, popping in just then.

The interruption infuriated the captain, and he growled savagely:

"What do you want?"

"Have you seen dot Bismarck?" queried Fritz.

"No!"

Fritz vanished with a grin into the pilot-house, for he saw what he had interrupted.

The captain assumed a gracious smile when he faced Kitty again.

"I was going to say, Miss Bly," said he, in purring tones, "that a man is bound to get jealous of any one who pays attention to the idol of his affection, or of one who wins the lady's esteem."

"Indeed," remarked Kitty, elevating her eyebrows.

She was wishing she was away from there just then, for the captain's attentions were very distasteful to her, although he had not troubled her much since his last attempt to make love to her.

"Now, Miss Bly," said Knox earnestly, "it has long been my most ardent wish to let you know how much I love——"

"Avast thar, captain, can I speak ter yer a moment?" roared Tim's voice just then, as he appeared in the pilot-house doorway.

Fritz had put him up to interrupting the ardent captain.

"What do you want?" yelled Knox madly.

"Ha' yer seen my monkey aroun' here?" queried Tim.

"No."

Tim stumped across the room with a broad grin on his face, and disappeared back in the kitchen.

Once more the captain turned toward Kitty, stifling his chagrin.

"I was about to remark," said he, "that I am a wealthy bachelor of means, and it has been my good fortune to meet with a young lady with whom I have fallen desperately in love."

"Have you?" asked Kitty, with an amused smile.

"It is useless for me to hide the fact any longer," said Knox, dropping upon his knees before the girl. "If I do not express my sentiment, and receive a return for my attention, I will be a most unhappy man. Miss Bly—look at me—speak to me."

"Don't be foolish, captain."

"No," said the captain. "I won't; but can't you see upon whom my love is centered? Oh, can you be so blind? Kitty! Kitty! It is——"

"Captain Knox!" exclaimed Jack, calling back to the cabin.

"Thunderation!" raved the captain, scrambling to his feet

"Captain!" yelled Jack. "Come in here, will you?"

"What do you want?" bellowed Knox wildly.

"Come 'yere on watch!"

"No, I won't," grabbed the captain, who did not fancy being pulled again in his attempt to make his affection known to the girl.

He might just as well have gone, however, for just then Tim stuck his head into the room, and shouted:

"Miss Kitty! Miss Kitty! Cast off thar, an' heave inter ther kitchen; yer stew is b'ilin' over on ther stove, an' our supper is all spoiled!"

"Oh, my goodness!" cried the girl, hurrying away in alarm. The captain jammed his cigar into his mouth and chewed it up in his vexation, while the three navigators laughed till they almost cried.

An hour afterwards Jack saw a sudden change in the barometer, portending a violent storm, and saw that the sea had changed color.

They were in a dangerous location for typhoons, for if one of these circular, sweeping storms arose, they were in danger of being cast ashore upon one of the thousands of islands dotting that section of the sea which the Racer was then traversing.

The boy called his two friends into the pilot-house, and told them of the impending danger.

The storm was rising in the east-northeast, and coming toward the west-southwest, along the distant Chinese coast.

The body of the storm was approaching at the rate of about twelve miles an hour, within which the wind was blowing at the rate of one hundred miles an hour.

The boy kept an anxious glance upon its approach, as the boat would doubtless plunge right into the teeth of it, and saw a number of junks coming along toward them, flying before its approach.

The storm was whirling around the atmospheric depression in a direction contrary to the motion of the hands of a clock.

Besides this, there was a vast intensity of vapor in the atmosphere, breaking into deluges of rain that fell at the rate of twelve inches a day, while before the storm there drove a huge tidal wave resembling a wall of foam forty feet in height.

"It is a typhoon," said Jack.

"Aye, lad, but they only come in summer," said Tim.

"From May to November generally, but when they do occur after that," said Jack, "they are generally much fiercer."

"Don't ye petter got below der surface?" queried Fritz.

"The water here isn't deep enough to save us from the influence of the tidal waves," responded Jack; "but we can try it."

He turned the lever to start the machinery, when there sounded a fearful report down below that shook the boat from stem to stern.

Jack instantly reversed the lever.

"Good heavens! What was that?" he gasped.

Fritz ran aft and made an examination of the machinery.

When he returned his face was deathly pale.

"Your pump shaft was broke in two!" he groaned.

"Then we can't sink the boat?"

"No; not before der storm was hit us."

"Then all we can do is to face it and try to drive through it," said Jack. "Stand by me, now, boys, for it will require all our skill to bring the boat safely through that hurricane."

On came the roaring gale, and tons of rain, dense mist, and angry tidal wave, with a rush that carried everything before it.

Jack sent Fritz to fix the broken pump shaft, and kept the boat out of the way of the plunging Chinese junks as much as possible.

Before they had gone far, however, one of the boats swung around with the gale, and her prow caught the stern of the Racer a fierce blow.

There came a grinding crash as the woodwork on the Mongolian vessel was splintered, and for a moment the two boats clove together.

Jack's fears arose, for it seemed as if the Racer might be swept along with the hapless junk.

The yellow-faced crew were venting their alarm in a medley of cries, and the wind caught the masts of the junk and tore them in two.

The next instant the roaring tidal wave struck the two boats, and knocking them asunder, the fierce waters hurled them.

"Hold on for your lives!" shrieked Jack.

The next instant the Racer began to whirl around and around, first riding upon her keel, then upon her deck.

Turned upside down, every movable object within the boat began to fly in the wildest disorder, and had not the people within her clung tenaciously to the stationary objects lying around, they might have had their lives battered out.

It made them all giddy and sick.

"Keep her head to it, lad!" yelled Tim, frantically.

"All right—in a minute!" gasped the boy.

It was a difficult matter to steer the boat in such a tumult, for she did not ride upon an even keel for one minute.

Over and over she rolled, like a log in the rapids, remaining under the furious water for some length of time, Jack striving hard to keep her head to the storm, but he soon found that it was utterly impossible to steer her the way she ought to go.

Caught in the powerful clutch of the tidal wave, she was swept along furiously, and spun around and around any way the seas chose to buffet her.

The inmates of the boat were bewildered and unnerved, but after a while the Racer emerged from the waves, and rode upon the surface beneath the blackest of skies, and in the midst of a storm more furious than anything Jack had ever been in before.

It was simply terrific.

The clouds hung so low they nearly grazed the sea, and lightning was flashing from one bank to another in blinding streaks, while intonations of thunder shook the sea.

They were yet held by the monster wave, which was rolling along with an awful noise, and the rain hardly poured down in drops, for the fall was so dense it seemed as if a solid sea was descending.

An inky pall overhung everything.

Above the roaring of the tidal wave whistled the wind, which was spinning the storm ahead, yet in a great circle, at the rate of one hundred miles an hour.

At times the flying screws of the boat were bounced from the sea, and the screaming and rattling that emanated from them added to the raging tumult until our friends felt as if they were in the infernal regions, with no chance to get away again.

Jack started the electric lights.

They cut like knives through the gloom, and showed the startled inmates of the boat a sea that was churned to foam, flying in great clouds of spray to meet the downfalling rain torrents.

In the midst of the chaos they saw several of the Chinese

CHAPTER XVII.

SAVING OF A LADY.

The Racer had on a pressure of sixty miles an hour, and as the sailing ship was coming along directly in her path, Jack started the pump at his best advantage for it.

junks getting torn to pieces, and their terror-stricken crews drowning all around them by the dozen.

As soon as Jack found the Racer riding upon her keel, he discovered that the storm was drifting her with it in circles, and at once made an effort to overcome the grasp of the tidal wave.

There was only one way to escape their present danger.

He must drive the boat straight through the storm center.

This conclusion was just reached in time, for the tidal wave was rushing headlong toward an island in its path, over which it was destined to sweep with the roar of a cataract.

If once it carried the boat along with it in the inevitable rush, there was no doubt that the Racer would be pounded to pieces upon the jagged rocks covering the surface.

Unaware of their extreme peril, Jack got his bearings by the compass, and put the boat's head straight toward the storm.

The resistance she had to overcome was so great, though, that she went ahead but slowly, although she had a sixty mile speed on.

Upon finding how useless it was to try to force her, the boy turned the lever around to its fullest extent.

The speed of the Racer was now increased to ninety miles.

A perceptible change took place then, but she did not make more than fifteen knots.

Yet it was sufficient to drag her through the fierce gale and trembling waters, and she pulled into the center of gyration just as the wave burst over the island.

A roar followed that exceeded in loudness the heaviest clap of thunder that ever burst in the skies, nearly deafening our friends.

Instantly the boat's progress stopped, for, caught in the swift tide that followed the bursting wave, it was dragged backward.

For a moment Jack imagined that they were destined to be swept irresistibly backward with the impetuous waters.

But this retrograded motion ceased as soon as the first effect of the wave striking the island subsided, and she went ahead again.

By that time she had so far passed the strongest influence of the typhoon that she began to gain headway, and after a few moments more she gathered increased speed.

Every one of the anxious crew in the little pilot-house watched the gallant boat's fight with the elements with anxious interest.

Calm, cool and collected, Jack remained at the wheel keenly watching the indicators and registers, alive to every motion of his vessel, and his nerves strung to a high tension.

He saw his wonderful boat overcoming the power of nature's elements, and a thrill passed over him, for he realized that since the day the world began he was the only mortal who had ever successfully fought and overwhelmed the wind and waves!

An ordinary ship, situated as the Racer was, most certainly would have foundered, and not a soul would have been saved.

It was a triumph the boy was proud of.

He kept the Racer going, and momentarily increasing her speed, he soon found it necessary to reduce power to the maximum at which she ordinarily traveled.

In due time they passed clear through the revolving tempest, and left it astern, the Racer traversing a boiling, lumpy sea covered by flying clouds, the waters agitated by the rough traveler who had gone raging across its bosom so ferociously a short time previously.

It was not until then that every one recovered their composure and excitedly discussed the subject in all its branches.

In the midst of their talk, Fritz came back and reported that he had repaired the broken shaft so well that it was as

strong as ever, and would work properly till the trip was ended.

Nine hours had passed away, and the indicator showed that they had been precisely ten days upon their journey.

Half of the time allotted was expended, and they were yet in the North Pacific, about 14,100 miles from home!

The boat had lost a few miles in her battle with the typhoon, but as nothing worse had occurred, Jack felt grateful enough.

"How did that shaft happen to break?" asked Jack, when order was restored and their excitement had abated somewhat.

"Dere must haf been some defects in dot rod," said Fritz. "Vhen you vhas put on dot bower so sudden she vented in two like a bipe-stem."

The sky cleared after the boat had ridden away from the storm, and as the supper hour approached Kitty began to prepare the meal, while Tim steered the boat and the others put things in order again.

By driving the boat hard the old sailor managed to make up for the time lost, and they were soon at the latitude in which they were due, according to Jack's reckoning for that night.

In all, 14,440 miles were covered.

The Racer passed safely between the Ladrone and Caroline Islands, and then headed for the north of the Melgraves and south of St. Pedro Island.

The trip across the Pacific was unmarred by any incident worthy of note, except that Captain Knox kept up a ceaseless lookout for Captain Sam Barry's ship, the Wind Wave, plying between San Francisco and Hong Hong.

As Jack, however, had received the captain's letter by mistake, that worthy, of course knew nothing of what was expected of him, and they saw absolutely nothing of his trans-Pacific vessel.

The captain cursed the fates when they reached the coast of Central America, near Guatemala, without having encountered the ship, but it did no good, and he had to content himself with the hope that Ralph Mizzen, of the brig Golden Star, would aid him off Vera Cruz.

Jack knew of the passage under the land leading into the bay of Honduras, as is already known, and the boy submerged the boat and began a search for it.

The boy's heart was in a flutter now, for if he failed to find the opening he would be sure to lose the race.

His nervous dread was occasioned by the absence of his accurate knowledge of the exact spot in which to look for the subterranean marine channel.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A SUBMARINE EARTHQUAKE.

"Here it is!"

"Dash me, wot a current!"

"Won't she stem it?"

"Law, sir, she wobbles like a cork."

"Then she may strike the side of the passage?"

"Aye, aye, and as sure as she does she'll go ter pieces."

Jack had lost three hours in his search for the subterranean passage, but they found it, and they also found such a fierce current flowing through it, that the boat could hardly fight her way against it.

They were in a rocky place, somewhat oval shaped, the floor, walls and roof worn smooth by the continual flow of the tide through it, but the electric lights dissipated the gloom.

Jack had once been caught in this passage without enough air, but he now had a week's supply compressed in the boat.

The passage was winding, and must have been nearly one

hundred and twenty-five miles long ere it reached the Bay of Honduras.

That was a submarine journey lasting between two and three hours. For the boy dared not rush along at the break-neck pace of a mile a minute in this dangerous place at the beginning, but he had not explored the Pacific side of the tunnel.

The rest of it was not new to him.

He kept the wheel in his own hands now, and kept Tim busy working the searchlight from side to side continually.

Once well within the passage the boat overcame the tide, and went along swifter, although it was hard work fighting against the stream for a while.

On sped the Racer, and the minutes seemed like hours to the anxious boy, for he knew not what dangers there might be ahead.

Half the distance was covered.

Jack began to feel easier.

But just then there came a dreadful sound outside.

The earth began to rumble and crack with dull reports, it swayed with a sickening motion, and the water in the passage commenced to heave and boil.

"An earthquake!" yelled the captain in horror.

"Put on more power, Tim!" coolly said the boy.

"Och, donner vetter, looker dere!" groaned Fritz, pointing ahead.

The passage was cracking in places, rocks were detaching themselves from the sides and top, and were falling into the water upon all sides, pelting the boat with fearful concussions.

"Is there any danger?" asked Kitty, turning very pale.

"Some," replied Jack.

"For heaven's sake, get us out of here!" implored Knox piteously.

The rumbling continued.

"Full power, Tim!" came from Jack's lips.

"Aye, but ther danger——"

"That be hanged! Full power, I tell you."

"Aye, aye, sir, an' ther Lord help us!" said Tim, complying.

The boat did not feel much of the influence of the current now.

Boom!

Boom!

Boom!

The rocks roared again with augmented violence.

A tremendous shower of rocks came down on the boat, making it wobble and crack, and the downfall was so great that Jack had to elevate the Racer several feet, in order to keep her from scraping along the rocks on the bottom.

"It's an account of the Corderilla Mountains overhead that this volcanic disturbance took place!" muttered the boy.

Mile after mile was covered in a remarkably short time, and then the shocks ceased.

The water had become boiling hot, though and then communicated its heat to the shell of the boat.

This in turn communicated a suffocating condition to the confined air, and began to torture the inmates of the boat.

Along sped the Racer very swiftly now, and finally she shot from the tunnel into the Bay of Honduras, whereupon Jack immediately rolled her to the surface.

They were all half fainting when he flung open the window and let in a cool draught of air that carried out the vitiated mass from the interior of the boat and it renewed their spirits and courage.

Off to the right was the city of Yzabel, with its shipping and docks, on the left were dense woods and great swamps, while straight ahead there was a sea of sixty miles ere they would reach the open water.

Jack lost no time getting out into the bay, while the rest were congratulating themselves over their lucky escape from death in the tunnel, and away shot the Racer again like a thing of life.

"That 'ere heat wuz awful!" gasped Tim. "Made me think o' wot I once suffered when I wuz cruizin' under ther Equator off Afriky, aboard o' ther Wabash."

"It couldn't have been much hotter than it was in the passage," said Knox.

"Hot," scoffed Tim. "Why, good Lord, man alive, d'yer call that hot?"

"I nearly perished."

"Then yer ain't never been ter ther Gulf o' Guinea, nigh Annabon Islan'?"

"Never," replied the captain.

"Yer'd oughter try it. You won't need ter die ter taste inferno then."

"Have you ever been there?"

"Me? Well, I should say! Wot d'yer think o' stuffin' ter-baccy in yer pipe thar, an' jest puffin' ter git it lit by ther sun without a match?"

"I don't believe it!" bluntly answered the captain.

"Waal, I did it."

"You don't say so."

"Aye, sir. An' wot's more——"

"Sweet violets!" began Fritz's accordeon just then, and the old liar stopped.

The mournful strains of that air filled him with woe unutterable.

He glared balefully out of one eye at the young Dutchman, and then uttered a whoop and made a rush for Fritz.

The Dutch boy fled into the cabin.

But they came together where no one saw them, and for a few moments every one heard a scuffle and the crash of heads getting pounded on the floor, after which all became still.

When Tim reappeared he had his nose in a sling.

Fritz did not materialize.

His left eye was nearly gouged out, and his hair laid scattered in clumps on the floor.

"What is that noise?" asked Knox, in a scared voice.

"Nothing," replied Jack. "My friends are amusing themselves, that's all."

"It sounded like a riot."

"Oh, that is a calm to what we usually hear."

The captain looked at Tim rather gingerly when he entered, and began to feel a great respect for him and the young Dutchman.

The Racer passed out on the Bay of Honduras, and Jack set her course up the coast, and whispered to Tim:

"Keep a sharp lookout for the Golden Star now."

"Aye, aye!" responded Tim, giving a hitch at his pants.

"This ship is our enemy's last chance for help from outside sources."

"I know it, Jack."

"And ten chances to one he is so desperate he will strain every effort to bring us in collusion with it, in order to thwart us."

"I ain't got no doubt o' that, my lad."

"You see, our journey is fast drawing to a close now, Tim."

"Wot's ther distance ter be gone now?"

"About 2,500 miles."

"An' less'n two days now fer us ter git back ter Wrightstown?"

"Yes. Now comes the tug of war."

"I'll kill the lubber sooner'n let him baffle us."

Tim struck the table with his fist emphatically, and Jack saw that the old sailor was in deadly earnest about it.

"No need of such violence as that, I hope!" he smiled.

Late in the afternoon the captain walked into the kitchen where he had Kitty alone, and accosted her with:

"Excuse me for intruding, but I want to settle a personal matter with you which can brook no further trifling, Miss Bly."

"To what do you refer, sir?" queried the surprised girl.

"You know that I am hopelessly in love with you."

"Not me, Captain Knox," replied the girl coolly.

"Yes, I am."

"Oh, no. You should have said the \$300,000 my father left me."

He gave a guilty start.

"Confound her, how did she fathom my design?" he muttered angrily.

Kitty laughed outright.

"You look uncomfortable and guilty," she remarked.

"Nonsense!" testily replied Knox, recovering his composure by an effort.

"I don't trust you."

"Ain't I a rich man?"

"Probably; you will be a poor one when Jack Wright wins your money."

"He won't win!" savagely retorted the captain.

"Wait! We shall see about that."

"Give me your answer. Will you have me or not?"

"No! Most decidedly not."

"Be careful."

"I not only dislike you, but I despise you as well."

"Beware, I tell you. Reconsider——"

"It is unnecessary."

"Then, by heavens, you shall repent of your decision."

"Is that a threat?"

"Take it as you like. I'll have you by fair means or foul!"

"Coward!" cried the girl, burning with anger, and she struck him in the face.

CHAPTER XIX.

A FRENCH DUEL.

Smarting with pain, humiliation and shame, the captain's sallow face turned deathly pale and he uttered a violent imprecation.

There leaped an ugly gleam of rage in his basilisk eyes, and he caught the girl by the throat with one hand, and raised his clenched right fist as if to deal her a blow.

"Cur!" panted the girl. "Strike!"

"By heavens! I'll kill you—I'll crush you!" he hissed, malevolently.

For an instant it seemed as if he would carry out his design, but just then Jack, having heard what passed, sprang into the room, and saw the situation at a glance.

"Brute!" he cried.

The next instant he dealt the infuriated captain a blow between the eyes that knocked him across the room.

He fell staggering against the wall.

"Oh, Mr. Wright!" cried the nervous girl, bursting into tears.

"Did that article hurt you?" asked Jack, his dark eyes flashing fire.

"No. But had you not arrived in time he certainly would have hit me."

"By Jove, I never thought he was so low!"

The boy caught the captain by the back of the neck, and twisting him around, gave him a terrific kick sternwards, and shouted:

"Get out of here, you despicable hound!"

"Curse you!" raved Knox wildly. "I'll——"

He clapped his hand to his hip pocket, but hearing a sharp click, he glanced up and confronted Jack's revolver.

Quicker than he, the boy had the drop on him.

The weapon was aimed plumb at his nose.

"Hands up!" coolly said Jack.

With a start and a scowl the captain obeyed him, and Jack added:

"Down on your knees with you!"

"What for?" hoarsely asked Knox.

"Ask no questions, but obey me, sir!"

Down went the rascal upon his marrow bones obediently.

He saw that Jack was thoroughly aroused, and would have no trifling.

"Now beg this lady's pardon for your rudeness!" ordered Jack.

"What!" stammered the man, his pride hurt. "Me?"

"Edward Knox, I am the master here! You obey, or take the consequence."

"I won't humble myself!"

Jack withdrew his watch and consulted it.

"I give you just sixty seconds," said he. "Disobey, and I'll shoot!"

He fixed a bead on the captain in such a determined way that Knox realized in what deadly earnest he was.

"Fifteen seconds!" said Jack.

The captain was speechless.

A short interval of silence followed.

"Thirty seconds!" sharply said the boy.

A look of unutterable agony crossed the face of Knox.

He burst into a cold sweat, and began to tremble like an aspen.

"Forty-five seconds!" the inexorable boy exclaimed.

The captain gulped down a lump.

"I beg your forgiveness, Miss Bly!" he gasped, chokingly.

"That will do, captain; you can arise," said the boy briefly.

He turned the pistol aside, and put his watch away in his pocket.

"Are you satisfied, Miss Bly?" he asked.

"His apology was not meant, but he is punished enough," replied Kitty.

Jack pointed at the door, and glared at Knox.

"Go!" he exclaimed.

The captain slunk away like a whipped dog.

"If I ever catch you doing any more dirty work," said Jack, "I am going to put a ball through your hide! Do you hear?"

The captain made no reply.

He had a murderous, ugly look upon his face that spoke volumes, though, as he passed into the cabin and vanished from sight.

"You will do well to watch him close," warned Kitty.

"Yes, he is a treacherous, underhanded scoundrel!" replied the boy.

"He seems desperately anxious to get me for a wife."

"I think you have fathomed the object he has in view."

"You mean his anxiety to control my legacy?"

"Of course. You know I've got him beaten now."

"It looks very much like it."

"And he wants to retrieve his loss with your money."

"That's what I told him, Mr. Wright."

"Don't you be afraid of him now."

"I won't be and never was," pluckily answered the girl.

Jack went into the cabin and saw the captain there.

The heated look seemed to have left his face, and although he was very pale, it was evident that he had mastered his emotion.

"Wright," said he, "you have made an ass of yourself."

"Perhaps so," replied the boy; "but I did it to good purpose, I think."

"On the contrary, you was too overzealous in your effort

"To give me a bare ladere Kitty Bly. I want satisfaction, now that we are alone, and you have got to give it to me."

"With pleasure," replied the boy. "What do you want to do?"

"Fight a duel. You have grossly insulted me."

"Edward Knox, a man of your depraved nature can't be insulted."

"I have a high sense of honor."

"Of brutality, you mean!"

"Draw your pistol!"

Jack did so.

"What next?" he asked.

"We will begin to fire as soon as the clock strikes the hour."

"Very well," said Jack, with a nod.

But ten feet separated them, and they stood aiming their revolvers at each other, and fastened their glances upon the clock.

In half a minute it was going to strike, and a deathly silence ensued between the two duellists.

Just then Tim appeared in the doorway with Whiskers in his arms, and seeing the captain aiming his pistol at Jack, he at once imagined that his young friend was about to get shot.

The old sailor did not pause to see that Jack was aiming his weapon at the captain, and was not the least bit frightened.

Tim fired the monkey at the captain.

Whiskers shot through the air like a cannon ball, and caught the captain a thump along the side of his head, knocking him down.

His pistol dropped to the floor, and Tim stumped up to him with a hop, skip and a jump, and dropped on top of him.

Twining his fingers in Knox's hair, he roared:

"Belay, yer rascal, belay!"

"Hello!" said Jack, lowering his pistol. "This is a French duel."

"A French duel?" echoed Tim.

"Yes—not a shot was fired."

"Let me up! This was an unfair advantage!" shouted Knox, struggling.

"Avast there, my hearty!" answered Tim, holding him down.

"We don't want no sich capers aboard o' this 'ere craft! Keep still, I tell yer."

"He wanted to retard the boat by injuring me," said Jack.

"Keel haul me, then, he'd a-had a tough job o' it!" exclaimed Tim, "for if he'd a-got the best o' yer, he'd a-had ter down Fritz an' me afore he'd a-stopped this 'ere boat."

"Let him get up, Tim."

"Aye, aye, just as yer says, Jack."

The old sailor arose, permitting the rascal to get upon his feet.

"We ought to lock you up," said Jack.

"No," huskily replied Knox. "Don't do that. I will be free."

"Do you swear it?"

"I swear."

"Then you can have your liberty; but recollect, we shall each take three at guarding you until this cruise is finished."

"It is unnecessary," gruffly answered the captain, smoothing his dishevelled hair and lighting a cigar to console himself.

He retired to a sofa and laid down, while Jack took possession of his pistol, and told Tim what occasioned the trouble.

It was then seven o'clock in the evening.

The boat had only thirteen hours and forty-five minutes to reach in order to reach WRIGHTTOWN at twelve o'clock on the first of January.

Jack remained in position.

"Watch the rascal!" said the boy.

"Aye, aye," replied Tim, seating himself upon a chair.

"If he does anything to injure us, shoot him like a dog."

All this while the Racer had been running up the coast at a rate of a trifle less than seventy miles, and at one o'clock in the morning she had gained three hundred and fifty miles by going between Cosumel Island and the coast of Yucatan.

This was the course mapped out for her, but unfortunately for Jack Ralph Mizzen had received instructions as to the time and place where to expect the boat, and was waiting and watching for the Racer between the island and the mainland.

It was such a narrow pass that the crew of the brig Golden Star could not fail to see the submarine Racer.

Fritz was the first to descry the sentinel brig.

"Dere vos a vessel ahet!" he announced.

"Turn the searchlight upon her," said Jack.

The Dutch boy obeyed, and as the glaring beams struck the brig they saw who she was by the gilt letters on her bow by the aid of a telescope.

CHAPTER XX.

DISABLED.

"Fritz, there floats our enemy's last hope!" exclaimed Jack.

"Shiminey Christmas! I don't see how dot veller vhas do us some harm."

By this time the Racer had arrived within half a mile of the brig, when suddenly there sounded an explosion in back of her.

Jack gave a violent start.

"Torpedoes!" he exclaimed involuntarily.

"It is evident that Ralph Mizzen has planted a number of torpedoes in the channel, and has them connected to his ship by electric wires. The one he exploded tells the story."

"Den he don't know dot his boss vhas apoart of dis poat?"

"Of course not, else he would not have done this."

"Och, mein Gott! Maybe dey bust us all by pieces alretty now."

"We stand a good chance to get blown——"

Boom! roared a second torpedo under them.

"Can't yer got away from here?" despairingly roared Fritz.

"No! There are sand flats on each side of this channel!"

Boom! came a third explosion.

This time the Racer gave a violent leap and spun around. A groan pealed from Fritz's lips, for the machinery came to an abrupt stop and Jack had to shut off power.

The Racer lay like a log upon the water.

The propeller shaft astern was broken at the base of the rudder post, and sagged down so that it could not revolve the eight screws.

Alarmed by the noise, Tim came in dragging the captain by the nape of the neck, and cried excitedly:

"Wot's amiss, lad? Has anything happened?"

"We are disabled by a torpedo!" exclaimed Jack.

"Eureka!" yelled the captain, cheering up.

"Looker out!" said Fritz. "Der brig vhas comin' after us!"

"They mean fight!" said Jack coolly.

"Vhy yer don't sink der poat?" asked Fritz.

"In this shallow water? No—it would not do."

"Vhy not?"

"Furnished with bombs or torpedoes, as they are, they could easily see the Racer lying upon the bottom, and they might drop an explosive down upon her and blow her to pieces."

"Lord have us!" gasped Tim. "Wot are we a-goin' ter 'do?"

Jack pondered a moment.

A plan of action at once suggested itself to him.

"First, make a prisoner of Edward Knox, so he can't interfere with us."

"I won't submit!" began the rascal, recoiling.

"You vhas got ter!" said Fritz.

He attacked the man, aided by Tim, and despite his struggles, they knocked him down and bound him hand and foot.

"Vat next?" queried Fritz, in panting tones, when this was done.

"Anchor the Racer," said Jack.

There were a number of grapnels in the storeroom, and plenty of wire, and Tim and Fritz hastily secured two of them, went up on deck, and fastened the boat fore and aft to where she rode.

As soon as this was done they returned to Jack.

"She vhas anchored," announced the Dutch boy, saluting.

"Good! Now arm yourselves," said Jack.

Tim secured all the firearms needful, and Kitty came in and said:

"Let me help you. I am a good shot, and not a bit afraid."

"Brave girl! We will accept your offer," said Jack. "Give her a rifle."

Tim handed her the lightest weapon, and then asked:

"Wot d'yer want us ter do now?"

"Man the ports—one of you on each side—and let Miss Bly remain in here. If the crew of yonder craft attack us, you must drive them back with your weapons."

"Aye, aye, that we will!" said Tim.

"I am going to attire myself in a diving suit, and go to the bottom in search of the mine they have planted. I must also see what the extent of the damage to our screws is, and try, if possible, to repair it, so we can continue our journey."

As soon as the brig got near enough the crew began to discharge their arms at her, and Jack drew down the window shutters to protect the glass, as the bullets rained against the dark hull.

At a signal from Jack his friends returned the fire.

They had repeating rifles, and fired volley after volley at the crew of the brig, very few of the shots failing to hit their mark.

They hastily swung their vessel around and tacked away.

"Rebuffed!" exclaimed Jack. "They did not expect such a reception."

"Look out!" cautioned the girl. "They may fire more torpedoes."

"I doubt if there are any more below us," said Jack. "There may be some further on. Anyway, I'm going down to see."

Repulsed as his enemies were, he saw that his friends could now spare him a while, and going back into the storeroom he put on a diving suit, and slung a bag across his shoulder, in which he put some wire, tools and other necessities.

He then went up on deck, and grasping one of the anchor wires, he let himself slide down toward the bottom of the channel.

The water was transparent, and he landed in a depth of thirty feet.

Starting the electric light upon his helmet, Jack glanced around and saw that the bottom was covered with white sand.

He next directed the rays of the light up at the boat and saw what damage had been done to her.

It could, he observed, be repaired, but until it was, the boat could not possibly use her stern propellers.

Jack then began to search the bed of the stream.

He soon found what he was looking for and picked it up.

"The electric wire by which they exploded the torpedoes," he remarked.

He kept hold of the wire, and tracing its course, he soon came to a torpedo, and then found that led on to two more. From there the wire ran up to the ship.

With a pair of nippers Jack severed the insulated copper

wire, and then grouping the three torpedoes in a heap, he made a complete circuit of the wires by binding the two ends together.

Next, he fastened a long wire to them and sent a float up to the surface and anchored it, to indicate where the torpedoes laid.

Then he uncoiled his own wire, and retreating to the Racer he connected the wire to the submarine boat's anchor wire forward.

This completed, the boy drew himself to the surface by the anchor wire, and reaching the boat he got up on the cylindrical deck, and made a wire fast from the anchor wire to a binding post on the front of the pilot-house.

"Miss Bly!" he shouted.

"Very well," responded Kitty.

Jack fastened his glance upon the brig, and saw that the remainder of her crew were loading a gun to blow the Racer to pieces, and were sailing her back toward the submarine boat.

They were crazed with rage over the hot reception they had got.

As soon as the brig was over the float, Jack turned to the window.

"Now!" he shouted.

The girl turned the lever.

An electric current flashed through the anchor wire to the torpedoes.

There came a smothered explosion, and the bursting shells struck the Golden Star, and tore a huge hole in her hull.

The next moment she began to fill up with water and sink.

CHAPTER XXI.

CONCLUSION.

"Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!" yelled Jack's friends, seeing what the boy had done, and the young inventor turned to Kitty with:

"I have turned the tables on them. They are caught in their own trap."

"Did you find out what damage was done to the Racer?"

"Yes. It is serious, but might have been worse. I can repair it."

"Do you need help?"

"I do. Please tell Fritz to put on a diving suit, and come out. Then tell Tim to sink the boat to the bottom so we can get at the damage."

While the girl was doing this, Jack hauled up the anchors, and Fritz soon joined him, while Tim sent the Racer to the bottom.

As she was going down they saw the Golden Star sink forever, while the remainder of her crew swam across the channel to the sand flats, and thus got over to Cosumel Island in safety.

The Racer had no sooner reached the bottom when Jack and Fritz sprang from her deck and set to work vigorously at repairing the broken shaft.

It occupied several hours to do the work properly, but they finally completed it, and the boat was raised and tried.

She now worked as well as she ever did before, and with his heart bounding with joy, Jack divested himself of his armor and hastened into the pilot-house.

"If the machinery don't give out, or some other unforeseen accident occurs," said Jack to Tim, "we will arrive at Wrightstown at ten o'clock, two hours earlier than the stipulated time."

"Aye, lad, but see thar—a storm off yonder, astern," replied the old sailor.

The boy's confidence fell.

He had cause for the most intense alarm, for they were in a neighborhood of fierce hurricanes that came suddenly and passed quickly, and the storm now impending was apt to destroy the boat.

She drove on sturdily, however, through the agitated sea, and the storm clouds grew darker and more threatening every moment.

Sudden the hurricane swept down upon her.

Jack sank his boat beneath the waves to avoid the tempest, and she kept on at five fathoms below the surface.

Several hours passed by.

Then Jack brought the Racer to the surface, but he found the moment she emerged that the storm was running along with her.

He had hardly taken note of this fact, when there came a yell of terror from Tim, and the old sailor sprang to the watchboard, and turned the lever, shutting off the power.

Too late!

There came a fearful crash.

The prow of the Racer had struck the hull of a ship!

It was a derelict wreck floating at the mercy of wind and wave.

With a fearful, grinding noise, impelled by the fearful rate of speed at which she was plunging ahead, the Racer's bow was driven deep into the oak timbers of the ship's hull.

Firmly wedged together, the two boats were tossed and beaten about by the heaving billows and the shrieking wind.

A scene of excitement followed.

"Unless she is cut free from that ship she will go to pieces!" the boy cried thrillingly. "If some one don't risk his life we will perish. To save you and possibly save myself I will hazard the work."

Up on the deck he dashed, and with the waves bellowing and the spray flying around him he crossed the deck.

He must have had a charmed life to reach the ship and get on board of her, but he did it, and disappeared within her.

Soon they saw him in the gaping fissure burst through by the prow of the Racer, and he was wielding his ax like mad, the chips flying in all directions, and the raging seas gushing in around him in torrents.

* * * * *

The 21st of January dawned bright, clear and beautiful in Wrightstown, everything was covered with a mantle of pure white snow, and the waters of the bay, unhampered by ice, were glittering in the rays of the hot sun.

This was the day set for the return of the Racer, and as the great wager was to be decided at twelve o'clock every one in the town was down to the water's edge an hour before the time.

Upon the dock stood the magistrate who held the stakes, and around him were grouped the scientific gentlemen who had witnessed the bet and were to witness its sequel.

No sign of the Racer was seen, and when the hands of the spectators' watches pointed to a few minutes to twelve the excitement and suspense grew absolutely painful.

The crowd had been noisy.

But now every sound was hushed save the lapping of the waves.

Still no sign of the Racer.

Then the whistle in the factory blew.

"Twelve o'clock!" ran from mouth to mouth.

"Goodness, I have won!"

The crowd came from below the dock, and as every one glanced down they saw the Racer rising from the water with Jack Wright on deck, clad in his diving costume.

The boat had come to anchor under

There every one saw him.

The cheer that arose, and the cheers that followed were terrific.

"He has won!" quietly said the magistrate.

"You have encircled the globe?" questioned one of the judges.

"I have," replied the boy.

"Then you have, indeed, won! But you can prove it?"

"By Edward Knox himself. He is willing to testify if I permit him to go without prosecuting him," said Jack.

They saw then that there had been trouble.

And they soon discovered what it was, for the boy disclosed the rank perfidy of the captain, and later showed them his letter, told them that he had freed the boat from the wreck, and wound up his story by stating that the boat had been compelled to make ninety miles an hour all the way from Cape Hatteras, in order to get in on time.

The ovation that was given Jack and his friends defies description.

News of what he had done spread all over the world, and added to his fame, while the despicable work of Knox so disgraced that individual that when they let him go, after he had affirmed to the fairness of Jack's trip, he had to change his name and leave New York an outcast beggar.

True to his promise, Jack used the money he won to endow several charitable institutions in Wrightstown, as he had plenty of money for his own needs.

He next went to New York with Kitty Bly, and upon a warrant she swore to, Gilbert Pugsley was arrested on a charge of having attempted to murder her on shipboard.

He had been striving at the time to possess himself of her fortune, but was baffled in the attempt in good season.

Tried and convicted, he was sentenced to a long term in prison, and the court appointed another guardian for the girl.

Kitty never forgot her friends of the Racer, and to this day is one of their staunchest friends.

As for Tim and Fritz, they were so pleased over the result of the trip that they ceased animosities, and even allowed Whiskers and Bismarck to become fast friends for a while.

Jack Wright had done all he set out to, despite all the obstacles placed in his way by an unscrupulous enemy, and was satisfied.

His inventive genius, never to be quelled, began to assert itself, however, as soon as he got settled back comfortably in Wrightstown again, and he soon began to devise a new marvel to travel on the sea.

And engrossed thus, with a strange contrivance, which we are very likely to become acquainted with in due time, we will leave him perfecting his new boat, and close our story.

[THE END.]

Read "THE BOY PIONEERS; OR, TRACKING AN INDIAN TREASURE," by Allyn Draper, which will be the next number (203) of "Pluck and Luck."

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